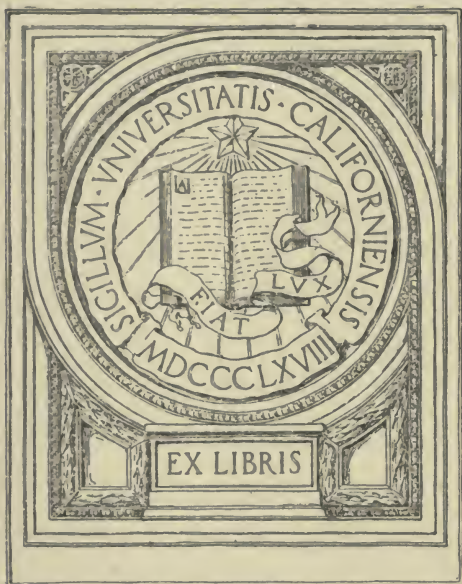
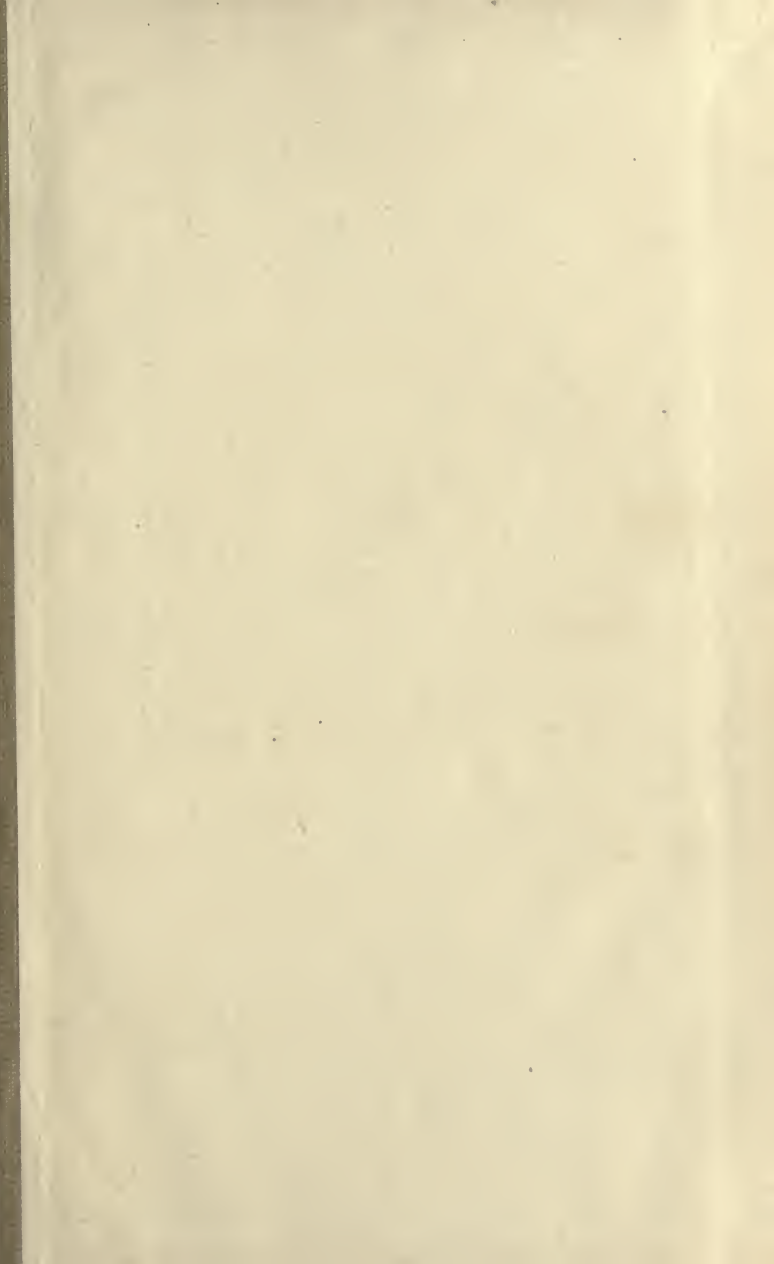


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THE NIGHT TIDE

A Story of Old Chinatown

BY
GRANT CARPENTER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
J. A. CAHILL



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THE H. K. FLY COMPANY
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Chan Gow Doy smiled with satisfaction when his eyes fell upon the fortune-teller.

Exotic

TO MY FATHER-IN-LAW
JAMES N. BLOCK
IN APPRECIATION OF BLESSINGS BESTOWED

466229



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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

CHAPTER

PAGE

BOOK I

THE LAW OF THE EAST

I.	The Man Without Ancestors	5
II.	The Girl Who Had Eaten Meat	10
III.	Male and Female Spirits	14
IV.	Consolation For The Dying	18
V.	The Oath of The Chicken's Head	25
VI.	The Vision in The "Long Draw"	32
VII.	The Prophet Speaks	36
VIII.	The Working of a Miracle	43
IX.	The Coming of The Law	50
X.	The Law of The Clan	63
XI.	The Mortgaged Slave Girl	72
XII.	The War of The Tongs	78
XIII.	The Highbinder Woman	87

BOOK II

WAYS THAT ARE DARK

I.	Gambling for Her Freedom	97
II.	Unexpected Turn of Fortune	106
III.	The Water-Snake Shows Its Head	113
IV.	Contending With The Evil Spirits	119
V.	Prophet and Priest Combine	125
VI.	Obstinate Spirits and Determined Men	133
VII.	The Death Song	137

BOOK III

EAST AGAINST WEST

I.	The Feel of Steel Bracelets	145
II.	The White Woman and Yellow Men	156
III.	The Bait In The Trap	168
IV.	The Trap Is Sprung	176
V.	The Snake In The Grass	188
VI.	Throwing Dust in The Snake's Eyes	197
VII.	The Old Woman's Bribe	203

BOOK IV

THE DAUGHTERS OF QUAN

I.	A Little Foreign Devil	209
II.	A Sacrifice To The Gods	217
III.	Another Pig For Market	230
IV.	The Toad In The Burrow of The Mole	241
V.	The Runaway Pig	247
VI.	A Laborer In The Vineyard	254

BOOK V

LITTLE CHICKEN

I.	The Home Of The Two Crippled Sons	263
II.	Little Chicken	268
III.	Quan Quock Ming's Revenge	273
IV.	The Boy Girl	284
V.	An Accounting Demanded	290
VI.	Glory of His Ancestors	295
VII.	The Girl Boy	304
VIII.	An Account Is Settled	308
IX.	A Prophecy Fulfilled	314

ILLUSTRATIONS

Chan Gow Doy smiled with satisfaction when his eyes fell upon the fortune-teller . . .	Frontispiece
	PAGE
When Chew Foo hid her in the foreign part of the city he smiled, saying, "I will keep you for myself" . .	66
"The old woman who guards you beats you often; and you know very well that you will be killed if you run away"	102
"I've got you this time, Little Pete," said the official	183
It was the afternoon before Chinese New Year and under the influence of the warm February sun Quan Quock Ming fell into a doze	279

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THE NIGHT TIDE

PROLOGUE

THE tide of night life in old Chinatown was just at its turning. The mimic emperor of an ancient dynasty, with a final stamp of his paper boot, a farewell wave of his wooden sword and an expiring tremor of his cardboard armor, had just surrendered the stage of the sweltering and reeking theater to the adventurous rats and cockroaches from the cellars and sewers beneath. The last insistent clash of cymbals had silenced all at once the shrieking fiddles, the wailing flageolets and the noisy banqueters at the Lotus Flower. From every quarter near and far, like irregular bursts of musketry, came the crash of triple oak and steel doors, and out of the barricaded gambling houses glided file upon file of pale ghosts, visible for an instant under flickering and sputtering arc lights before they faded into the spectral night.

In the street of the Golden Chrysanthemums, where wistful faces peered from barred windows, the gaudy lanterns with misty aureoles were whisking out. Here and there flashes of light spanned the narrow passage, only to be blotted out by slamming doors and clanking bolts, and

hollow laughter on painted lips ended in sobs as slave girls turned away to weep out the night in silence. The yellow phantoms that shuffled past scarcely stirred the chill air, heavy with the perfume of sandal wood and lily blossoms, thick with the dead odor of burned poppy juice. Plunging and struggling through the night fog came the melancholy shriek of the last ferry boat crossing the bay, and a single clang of the big clock at St. Mary's. Then all was still but for the siff! siff! siff! of slippered feet scurrying always from a host of malignant spirits and hurrying ever toward the Ten Courts of Justice in the Kingdom of the Dead.

"Are they all so hopeless as they seem?" I asked of my companion, Little Pete.

✓ The light of his cigar illumined his face for an instant, and it, too, was ghastly.

"Every man of them carries his coffin on his back," he answered.

"Hatchet-men?"

"No; evil spirits."

"And the women?"

"The women!" There was both surprise and contempt in his tone. "They have nothing to do with it all but to work and to wait."

"For what?"

"Work for the men and wait for the worst."

"Death?"

"It is too long coming—so they pray to the Mother of Heaven to hasten it. But how can the

one little goddess permitted to them contend against the many gods allotted to men. The death of a woman always causes some man discomfort, and the gods cannot permit that."

"Ah ma!"

It was a scream almost in my ear, followed instantly by a blinding flash and a deafening roar. A figure sprawled on the sidewalk at our feet; then came the soft patter of slippered feet on a creaking stair, the shrill of a patrolman's whistle in the distance, the thud of heavy boots pounding down the street toward us and the flash of a night light in our faces.

"Hello, Pete! Has the Big Chink started something again?"

"I know nothing of the matter."

"The hell you don't!"

Later, over a plate of preserved fruits and a pot of Mandarin tea, I asked:

"Who is the Big Chink?"

"A man with the wisdom of the gods, the cunning of demons and the heart of a chicken," answered Little Pete.

"Do you know him?"

"As I know my own shadow." He flicked at the ash of his cigar with the inch-long nail of his little finger, watching the glint and sparkle of his solitaire a full minute before he looked me in the face again. "When you hear the death cry in your ear, when you see tears on the cheeks of a woman, when you hear a girl scream

in the night you will surely see, if you look sharply enough, the shadow of him on the wall."

"What is his name?"

"Quan Quock Ming."

"His business?"

Upon the face of Little Pete appeared the smile that must have earned for him the name bestowed by his people—Fung the Perfect.

"He is a promoter of happiness and longevity."

Almost nightly for weeks, at the turning of that tide, we met, sometimes behind the barricaded doors of a deserted gambling house, occasionally in the silk, lacquer and perfume of a singing girl's reception room, but oftenest on the carved and gilded balcony of the Lotus Flower. And nightly, while I watched the flitting lights on the purple bay or the golden glow of the city beyond, hearing only the murmur of his mellifluous Cantonese or faultless English, Little Pete, with fingers as deft as an Indian silk-weaver's, gathered the threads of Quan Quock Ming's life and wove them into fantastic patterns easily understood and never to be forgotten.

BOOK I

THE LAW OF THE EAST

CHAPTER I

THE MAN WITHOUT ANCESTORS

MY mother, with the waters of sorrow streaming down her cheeks and falling on mine, had held me close in her arms and kissed me for the last time, and had slipped her last silver coin into my trembling hand. I had waved my yellow silk handkerchief until I could no longer distinguish her form in the group ashore, or hear her voice admonishing me to be a good boy and never, never forget her. Then it seemed that the summer sun was suddenly obscured, and the harbor was full of dismal depths into which the sampan threatened to plunge after each sickening uplift; and I, who had been so eager to depart and so fearful that I might not, was filled with a mighty longing to return, knowing that I could not.

Then it was that I crouched in the stern of the sampan and whimpered like a sick puppy, until a wrench at one ear and a slap on the mouth made me yelp and take my knuckles out of my eyes to

discover the rude interrupter of my grief; and I, a very small boy with a large and disconsolate heart, stared in gaping terror through a fresh flow of tears at—him, a very big man with a terribly fierce frown.

"Hai-e-e!" he growled. "There are two lessons in one, and nothing to pay. That should teach you to keep your ears open and your mouth shut."

His severity and my discomfort impelled me to put one hand over my mouth and the other over the ear for protection and alleviation, especially as I had nothing better to do with my hands. Then, realizing that one covered an ear which he had commanded me to keep open, and the other could hardly hold my mouth, through which my heart was ready to burst, a new spasm of fear seized me, and I held both hands over my closed lips, let my tears trickle through my fingers and smothered my distress in sobs. The fierce one relaxed his frown, but still staring at me, said, not unkindly:

"Now, my son, that your ears are open, you may listen. First dry your eyes, then open your mouth and speak of the causes of such a disturbance."

When I had succeeded in swallowing my heavy heart, I told him, with many tears and sobs, the exact truth (which is not so difficult when one is very young); and the truth was that my mother, fortunately, had many children, though little

money, while my uncle, unfortunately, had no children and much money; that I had no father, but my uncle in the land of the white foreign devils beyond the great sea had adopted me, and would teach me to earn money and worship my ancestors; that it was a long way to the place where the sun rises, and it might be a very long time before I could see my mother again; and that I doubted if the silver coin she had given me, even though it were the equivalent of a thousand copper cash, would pay my passage back, if I should become sick for my home or be stoned by the foreign devils.

"My son"—his voice was earnest and his demeanor grave—"even at this moment you are more fortunate than I, for I have nothing—no money, no women folk, no ancestors, and, worst of all, I have a bad *fung shui*."

I glanced at the handkerchief in which he carried a few articles, and observing it he continued:

"That holds as little promise as my life—a cold pipe, a box without opium and a lamp without oil. How can one live and prosper with a bad *fung shui*, when he cannot drive away the evil spirits that pursue him?"

I could not answer that, nor could I understand how one could preserve his life so long and his health so well without the blessings that come on favoring winds and flowing waters from the tombs of ancestors advantageously located. I knew that my mother would never have permitted

my departure if the geomancers, who selected the burial-place of my father, had not assured her that the *fung shui* was good. So I merely shook my head.

"One more lesson, my son," and when I quickly clapped a protecting hand over the ear that had not been pulled, he smiled a little and said: "Not of that sort. But attend upon what I shall say. You have a good *fung shui*, no doubt, so if you would be both prosperous and happy have always a tranquil mind, a courageous heart and a generous hand. Remember that you have kindred, money and ancestors, while I—why I have not so much as a single friend or a copper in cash."

He seemed so melancholy and winked his eyes so quickly that I was quite sure, had he been as young as I, he, too, would have whimpered; and I knew that his liver was large with benevolence, though his hand was heavy when he was disturbed.

I had been so much humored and so seldom reproved by indulgent relatives that I was altogether unaccustomed to such correction as he had administered, but instead of resenting it deeply, I felt that he was one I should respect, obey and serve; and to show I was worthy of the interest he had taken in me, I asked very politely:

"What is your honored surname?"

"My insignificant surname is Quan," he replied.

"Distinguished and venerable Quan, what is your age?"

"Alas, I have wasted forty years."

"Sir scholar, I would be your poor, cheap friend, but I doubt if my *fung shui* would help you."

"My son, you have a benevolent liver and a proper respect for your elders so we shall be friends and help one another whenever possible—shall we not?"

We had reached the ship before I could frame words to tell him how happy I was to find so good a friend, even though he had a bad *fung shui* and no ancestors; and then I remembered that he had no money either, so I paid the sampan man twenty cash—ten for him and ten for me. And from that moment Quan Quock Ming has never failed to give me good advice when I required it, and I have never refused to give him money when he needed it. Therefore our friendship has endured.

CHAPTER II

THE GIRL WHO HAD EATEN MEAT

ON the vessel's deck many of my countrymen, some of their women and a few children, were mixed in great disorder and confusion with numberless boxes, baskets and bundles, over which some stood guard and others disputed, while still others, wishing neither to stand nor to quarrel, sat listening, watching and waiting until some one would tell them what disposition to make of themselves and their belongings. The midday heat and the excitement of embarkation produced intense irritation, and men bested in disputes cursed their wives, whereupon the women scolded their children, and the children screamed.

Quan Quock Ming found a clear space, let himself down on the hot boards heavily, laid his bundle beside him, clasped his hands over his knees and fixed his gaze wistfully toward the west where Canton lay, paying no heed whatever to the uproar beyond frowning occasionally when some man cursed more fluently, or some child screamed more piercingly than usual; while I, feeling the need of my new-found friend in the strange surroundings, sat as near to him as politeness would permit and sought diversion in

observing all that came from the ferment. Some of the sights amused me very much, and all interested me.

Soon a stoop-shouldered, pock-marked man, a squat, fat woman and a weazened girl came over the side and joined the company. The man and woman carried a few small parcels, while the girl reeled under an enormous bundle, and as she swung her burden from her back it fell with a clatter. The man struck her a blow with the open hand on one side of the head, and, as she staggered, the woman cuffed her on the other side. The girl crouched low between them, shielded her head with her arms and peered fearfully this way and that, but made no sound. After cursing her for her clumsiness the man and woman sat down, mopped their faces and grumbled of the heat, paying no more attention to her.

"Did that hurt?" I asked, when she had found a place near me.

"Not so much as hunger," she muttered listlessly without turning her eyes toward me.

"Do you get such beatings often?"

"Yes; but I am fed twice a day."

"Your tongue is thick in its speech. From what place came you?"

"From up the river."

"Where everyone hungers?"

"Where people die for the want of a handful of rice, as my father did; where others die for stealing a handful of rice, as my elder brother

did; and where a family can live for a month on half a mat of rice, as my mother and younger brothers and sisters will."

"But what will they do when the rice is gone?"

"Sell another girl."

"And when all the girls are gone?"

"Sell a boy to one who has no son to preserve the family name."

"And what will your mother do, hungry one, when there are no more children to sell?"

"Die—and lie unburied until the flood comes to bear away the bodies."

I thought of my mother and began to feel a little sorrow inside of me, so I asked: "Do you never cry when you think of it all?"

"How can one cry when one no longer feels the pang of hunger?"

With shame I recalled my grief upon parting from my mother, so changed the subject.

"What is your honorable family name?" I inquired.

"I am of the family of Fong, named Fah."

"Do you belong to them?" and I nodded toward the man and woman who had beaten and cursed her.

"Yes; they paid half a mat of rice for me."

"Are you their servant or their adopted daughter?"

"How should I know? Why should I care when I remember that I have eaten meat? I

may be sold as a slave to-day, or I may be given in marriage to-morrow."

When she, a child not much larger than I who had lived but ten years, spoke of marriage Quan Quock Ming turned and gave her such an appraising scrutiny as one would bestow upon a fowl in the market-place, but remained silent; so I asked the question that I thought was in his mind.

"What is your age?"

"I had enough to eat for twelve years and was hungry for three."

She was watching a baby beside her eat cakes, and as the crumbs fell she picked them up and munched them greedily.

"Are you hungry now?" I asked.

"I feel no pain, but I could eat always," she replied. "They say that I am a great pig. I have heard my honorable master say we are going to a country where no one ever hungers, and all have meat every day, but I cannot see how that can be true. Can you?" and she stared incredulously when I told her that I had given the matter no thought.

Soon we were led to different parts of the ship, I to the quarters of the men, which made me feel very important, and she to the place reserved for the women and children; and when I observed that Quan Quock Ming's eyes followed her I thought he might feel as kindly disposed toward her as to me.

CHAPTER III

MALE AND FEMALE SPIRITS

As long ago as I can remember I was told that if I were not a good and obedient boy I would be given over to the white foreign devils, who would carry me to the other side of the world in a great devil boat that had no oars or sails, but was driven by fire; so, when I found myself in the hands of the *fan quai* and upon just such a vessel, I was terrified, even though many of my countrymen were with me and did not seem to be disturbed in the least. Then I had the thought that the tale of my uncle adopting me had been concocted to get me away with as little trouble as possible, and I wondered what wickedness of mine had finally decided my mother upon the execution of her oft-repeated threat; and whether she had given me up willingly or with the sincere regret she had manifested.

In my doubts and fears I felt greatly the need of my new-found friend, and I kept as close to him as possible, being at the same time very watchful; and once when a *fan quai* sailor started suddenly toward me I seized Quan Quock Ming's arm and screamed in a convulsion of terror. Everyone laughed at me, but I did not relax my vigilance and hung closer on his heels, being care-

ful to keep him between myself and the white devils who tortured me with grimaces and grabs at me. That was no easy task, as he took no rest at all but continually walked hither and thither, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, pausing occasionally in a way that led me to believe he intended to rest, then starting off again so suddenly that I could scarcely keep pace with him. Down into the sleeping quarters where some of my countrymen were chatting or smoking opium, then up again, and to this and to that side of the vessel he would hurry. He paused oftenest and longest where the opium smokers were, speaking to no one, even ignoring the customary greetings and friendly inquiries of our countrymen, but watching intently while one prepared his opium and then rushing away at the first puff of smoke.

As darkness fell over the harbor the small boats hurried back to their moorings. One by one the twinkling lights appeared here and there, and I shivered a little, more from the fearful stillness than the evening cold. Quan Quock Ming, too, seemed fearful, for he started at sounds and shrank at shadows, and at times cursed or muttered or gesticulated excitedly. His inexplicable behavior augmented my fears, so I crept closer to him in my loneliness, hoping he would speak with me and stay the tears that were ready to flow. And he did. Though Quan Quock Ming has been my very best friend for many years I have never known him to converse with anyone so freely as

with me that evening, while we stood at the side of the ship watching the lights on the shore that we were leaving.

"My son," said he, "we shall soon leave behind us our country, our homes, our people and our ancestors."

"But, sir scholar," said I, "you told me that you had no ancestors."

"I had ancestors, but I have lost them."

I waited for him to explain that to me, but as he remained silent I asked:

"Would you be good enough to tell me, sir scholar, how one can lose his ancestors, except by death; and even then their spirits return to him?"

He turned his eyes from the shore and kept them cast down as he walked quickly to and fro without speaking, while I, with very long strides, attempted to keep pace with him so that I might not lose his answer. While I was thinking that I might have given offense by asking an impertinent question, he said:

"Your father died, and his friends went to the housetop and called to him to return. They placed uncooked rice and roasted flesh by his side and afterward buried his body in the earth with the head to the north, while they, with their faces to the south, looked to heaven, whither his spirit will go in its proper time.

"In every man, my son, the intelligent spirit is of the *shan* nature, and the animal spirit of the *kwei* nature, just as there are male and female

flowers upon the same plant. All the living must die, and dying return to the ground with the *kwei*, but the *shan* issues forth and is finally displayed on high in a condition of glorious brightness. *Kwei* is the mother spirit that watches over us here, while *shan*, the father spirit, is finding the way to the Land of the Immortals.

"The *shan* of your father is now in the Ten Courts of Justice in the Kingdom of the Dead, which lies at the bottom of a great ocean beneath the earth. The *kwei* of your father remains with his bones, which are buried on a height in dry soil, that they may grow yellow with the passing of the years, and rest in peace. And the *kwei* looks down upon you with benevolence and comes freely to the ancestral tablet on the family altar to receive your sacrifices and hear your prayers. So it is with all your ancestors whose contented *kwei* has not yet reunited with the purified *shan* in the Land of the Immortals. Thus your *fung shui* is good."

"But is it true, sir scholar, that the dead can have knowledge of the service we render them?"

"When Tsze Kung asked the illustrious Kung-foo-tsze that, the master answered: 'There is no present urgency about the point. Hereafter you will know for yourself.' "

Quan Quock Ming stopped suddenly before me, and gripping my arm so hard that I winced with the pain of it, said:

"The sons of Quan know for themselves!"

CHAPTER IV

CONSOLATION FOR THE DYING

QUAN QUOCK MING sighed deeply, rested his arms on the vessel's rail and kept his eyes fixed upon the distant shore that grew darker each moment as the lights began to wink themselves out; and after a few moments of silence he began to speak in low, earnest tones.

"There was one of the family of Quan," he said, "who grew weary of the beatings of the village schoolmaster by day and the watching of his father's pulse field by night, and he took to the river—the great river that bears the good and the bad, the profitable and the unprofitable, the unstable living and the unburied dead steadily and irresistibly to the sea. He paused where the tide turns it back upon the shore and became a watcher of the river and a gatherer of its burdens, skimming the surface and searching its depths for the profit that may come from the living or the dead.

"In time the son of Quan bought a boat and took a wife—one born and reared in a sampan, as were her parents and her grandparents before her. She seldom placed a foot upon the land, knowing the great city only as a place where one

must leave his habitation and brave many unknown dangers even to buy the evening meal. She took her place at the oars and did a man's work with her strong arms, and a man's cursing with her sharp tongue; and there she bore him two sons, pausing only in her labors long enough to dip them in the muddy waters of the river and put a single garment upon each.

"Unlike others of the river class the father had acquired enough of the classics to know their worth, and when his sons were old enough he sent them from the boat to the schoolroom to have the ancient wisdom beaten into their heads, while he plied the oars with only their mother's grumbling aid. Through the succeeding years he remained poor, honest, industrious and economical, and being altogether a worthy man, merited the good fortune that came to him so unexpectedly, for one day he found the floating body of a white foreign devil, and in the pockets were 150,000 cash, all in coined gold, of which one ounce is the equivalent of 12,000 cash. Being well advanced in years, he turned his boat up the river toward his native village where all were his near kin; and there he bought a good house and productive land, and settled himself to spend his old age in such ease and tranquillity as the possession of great wealth would warrant.

"When his kinsmen of the village learned of his opulence they protested great friendship and sought loans, pleading various needs; and when

he refused them as courteously as possible, they tried to defraud him in devious ways. May their wicked hearts be eaten by dogs! But they failed, for he knew the ways of the country as well as the manners of the city. The villagers became very angry and did much to vex and annoy him; and when he still walked his way with no show of resentment, they became bolder till even the old women and children would shout after him:

“‘Hai-e-e! Ducks fatten on the livers of the dead!’

“Know, my son, that they who live by the land feel a great superiority over such as live by the water, and speak of them as ‘ducks.’ So those words were contemptuous. And in the third ward of the ninth court of justice ducks feed upon the livers of the dead; therefore those words were insulting.

“Often the villagers would stealthily set their dogs at the old mother—may their wicked skulls be filled with porcupines!—and laugh when she jumped in fright to avoid the curs that snapped at her bare heels, for she would never wear shoes, though the stones made her limp and hobble.

“In time he of the family of Quan selected wives for his sons from a neighboring village, and though all of his kinsmen, with their wives and their children, went to the wedding feasts with trifling presents and soft words, they ate

and carried away much more than they gave, and secretly cursed the provider.

"The family worked diligently in the fields and grew good crops, but they could not watch so closely that their envious kinsmen would not steal the grain before it could be garnered; and often the elders of the village imposed heavy fines upon the old man because he would not assist others in guarding their crops against thieves, while his own was being stolen. Ha-i-ie! May their rotting bones be rapped with hammers! And when the floods washed away a bit of ground from a field, the owner would go at night and take baskets of soil from the fields of Quan.

"The old mother could never accustom herself to village life or to farm labor, and was never content with the earth under her feet or a roof over her head. She often humiliated the family and exposed herself to the ready ridicule of the villagers by running away to the river, sitting in the rain or wading in the roads when a heavy downpour made torrents of them. As the villagers grew more vexatious she used her sharp tongue more frequently, and the old father was no longer strong enough to give her such a beating as would keep her quiet in the house.

"One day, after she had beaten both of her sons and their wives with a stick, and quarreled with her husband because he would not let her go back to the sampan and the river, she climbed to

the roof of the house, took off her clothing in the sight of the whole village and yelled and cursed until she could no longer make a sound. Her husband, in shame and disgrace, took to his bed and refused meat and drink; and when it was whispered through the village that the rich man was about to die, his poor kinsmen, as usual, quarreled among themselves over the selection of a funeral director.

"The sons, who must be plunged in grief upon the death of their father, could do nothing so improper as to attend to the business themselves; and it was certain that much money would be spent upon the funeral of such a wealthy man. It was equally certain that many cash would stick to the fingers of the director. When the elders could not settle the question among themselves, they went to see the old father about it, and the family could not be so discourteous as to refuse them admittance to his bedside.

" 'You are about to die, venerable uncle,' said one, 'and we have come to ask that you select one among us to direct your funeral.'

" 'I do not believe it possible for me to die now,' said the old man, very politely, 'though I would, very gladly and quickly, if I but had gold leaf to eat. I cannot hang or drown myself, for such a cheap death would be a great disgrace to one of my station; but, alas! I am too poor to buy gold leaf and die an expensive death.'

" 'You are very wrong, venerable uncle, to say

such a thing,' argued another, and all of them nodded their heads many times. 'You are surely about to die of a sickness, and even if you are not, we would respect you none the less if you should, upon reflection, decide to hang or to drown yourself. Remember, it is only very high officials who can eat gold leaf.'

" 'And do not forget, venerable and respected uncle,' urged another, 'that you have lost your face in the village. If you should take your own life at once it would establish your innocence; but if you should die a lingering death people would still talk.'

"Then all of them busied themselves in taking off the clothing he wore, in putting the funeral garments upon him, and in bringing in the coffin he had kept in readiness for a long time, each meanwhile urging such reasons as he could give why he should be selected to take charge of the burial.

" 'I am your blood relative and nearest kinsman, venerable uncle, and therefore should bury you,' said one.

" 'You have had no experience with funerals, and I have had a great deal, and have always satisfied the relatives of the dead,' argued another.

" 'But neither of you has a catafalque or dishes, as I have,' declared a third. 'Therefore I will not have to rent them, and that will be a great saving.'

“ ‘The most important matter is the sacrificial meats,’ urged another. ‘I am a butcher and therefore can buy very cheaply, and I will watch closely, so that none will be stolen.’

“Thus they wrangled until the old man turned his back upon them and died without uttering another word.”

Quan Quock Ming paused so long that I thought he expected me to speak, so I said:

“So much attention paid to one who has lost his face must have been a great comfort in his last moments.”

CHAPTER V

THE OATH OF THE CHICKEN'S HEAD

SUDDENLY I discovered that the last light had disappeared and we, Quan Quock Ming and I, were swinging to and fro in utter darkness. I crept closer to him and clung to his coat, sick with fear, and it was not till he spoke again that I dared look behind me. One of the ship's lamps that seemed miles away assured me that we were not already on our way to the Kingdom of the Dead.

"The elders of the village held many meetings, all at the home of the dead," continued Quan Quock Ming, "and it was necessary to provide a feast each time. And each time they said: 'We will eat first and then discuss the matter!' And after they had eaten: 'Now we must sleep upon it.' At last, when they had consumed everything that could be provided, they selected a funeral director by casting lots.

"The elder son gave him 20,000 cash to buy the meats and cover the other expense, and he sent to a nearby village for an ox, two pigs, a goat and many fowls; but on the way home the kinsmen of the family attacked the bearers with sticks and stones, drove them off and stole the

meats. May boiling oil be dripped upon their naked bodies!

"The son gave the director 10,000 more cash, but he was dishonest and bought little meat, and the greater part of it was stolen by the villagers, while the family waited for the geomancer to select a burial-place that would assure a good *fung shui* to the descendants of the dead; and when the funeral director led the musicians, the bearers and the mourners across a field of growing pulse to the chosen spot, the owner of the field, with some of his neighbors, attacked the procession, beat the mourners and threw the coffin into the road. Under cover of night laborers placed it in the tomb; and the sons lost their faces in the village because they gave their father, who was a wealthy man, such a poor, cheap funeral.

"In the three years' period of mourning, the sons, of course, could transact no business and raise no crops. The old mother wandered away to the river and was never seen again. At the end of the third year the brothers sold the house and land for 80,000 cash, but they could not be so discourteous as to count the strings when they were paid over by the middlemen, so afterward found only 850 instead of 1,000 cash to the string.

"Still, with confidence in the good fortune that must come to them from the bones of their ancestor resting in tranquillity in a high place, they

turned their faces to the city at the mouth of the river and took up the former vocation of their father. By industry and frugality they saved nearly 15,000 cash in three years, and then the wife and the infant son of the elder brother—his first-born—died upon the same day.

"Aih-yah! Such a terrible misfortune could come only from a bad *fung shui*!

"The brothers could not rest until the elder had returned to his father's tomb to learn if by any chance the grave had been disturbed, or if water that mildews the bones had invaded it. Hai-e-e! It was worse than that—much worse. The body had been removed, and the remains of another were resting there. An elder of the village had died, and his relatives had stolen the tomb so that they might get a good *fung shui*, while the bones of Quan were rotting in a damp hole at the foot of the hill.

"The son first offered sacrifices to the tutelary gods and worshiped the memory of his ancestors at the village temple, and then made complaint to the elders, saying:

" 'These wicked men have murdered my wife and my first-born son by stealing my father's grave and throwing his bones in low place,' but the elders only shook their heads and answered:

" 'If murder has been committed you should complain to the district magistrate.'

"When, very justly and properly, he gave the son of him who had been buried in his father's

tomb a well-deserved beating, the elders met together again and listened to the shouting of the one who had been beaten, urging always:

“‘Tell us more.’

“‘But they turned deaf ears to the son of Quan, saying:

“‘You talk too much.’

“‘They decided that for his wickedness he and his descendants should be cut off forever from the family of Quan and denied the right to worship the ancestral gods at the village temple. Then his kinsmen set upon him with sticks and stones and drove him away. May sheep tread the festering flesh from their bones!

“‘Bruised and bleeding he dragged himself to the feet of the district magistrate, complained of the beating he had received and had the villagers brought to answer. They knocked their foreheads upon the floor, shed many tears and cried out:

“‘This wicked man attacked a peaceful clansman without provocation—one who had performed his filial duty well by burying his father in a good place at great expense.’

“‘It is true that this man has disturbed the peace of honest villagers,’ said the magistrate. ‘Let him be beaten upon the feet with bamboos and then be kept in prison until his kinsmen pay the villagers 10,000 cash as damages,’ but he said nothing of the 10,000 cash the younger brother had to pay to him as squeeze.

"Aih-yah! What terrible misfortunes come from a bad *fung shui*!

"The brothers returned to Canton, tramping and begging like wandering Hakkas, but there they quickly hunted out a near kinsman of one of the wicked elders of the village up the river, and gave him a good beating. Within a week their boat was destroyed in the night time.

"Thus the misfortunes that one must expect from a bad *fung shui* pursued them wherever they went, and they knew they could not hope for peace or prosperity until their father's bones were reinterred in the place selected for them, where they would be at rest and his spirit would be content and benevolent. So together they went to the village whence their wives had come, and there employed men to go at night, throw the bones of the elder out of the grave and reinter the remains of their father; but the villagers soon found it out, and they threw the body back in the hole at the foot of the hill.

"The brothers were good, pious men, determined to fulfil their filial duty to the dead, so they hired fighting men to go to the village of the clan of Quan on the market day and beat the elders; but complaint was made, the brothers were thrown into prison and beaten and starved until their last copper cash had been wrung from them. Then their home in the city was burned at night, and all of their ancestral tablets were destroyed. How is it possible for such terrible

things to happen, except through a bad *fung shui*?

"The brothers, without money, without shelter and without ancestors, found a kinsman of their mother who was good enough to take them upon his junk, but on the second day it was sunk in the river by a typhoon. The wife of the younger was drowned, but his ten-year-old daughter was saved and sold as a slave.

"It may have happened that the brothers were not drowned, though they were seen no more, either upon the river or in the village; and it may be that it was they who sold the daughter for money enough to pay the passage of one to the land of the *fan quai*, where gold is plentiful and easily acquired. But this much is certain: If either be living, he will fight for his father's tomb until he is laid in his own, for the brothers knelt beside the humble grave of their father at midnight, and, cutting off the head of a chicken, took a solemn oath to perform their filial duty if it took their last cash and their last breath. And you know, my son, that he who violates that oath shall live like a chicken, shall die like a chicken and shall, in the next life, be a chicken!

"So it is, my son, that one may lose his ancestors. It is vain for him to place ancestral tablets upon the family altar, for the spirits are blind to his pious sacrifices and deaf to his earnest prayers when his *fung shui* is bad; but they come in strange ways, and in unexpected forms, and at inopportune moments, bringing pain, misery and

misfortune. Even a son may be born to him, and at the very instant of his rejoicing over the great good fortune, the child will die; and then he knows that it was not really a son, but an evil spirit sent in that guise to mock him. His nights are filled with fearful visions, and his days are full of woe.

"You have, no doubt, observed my perturbations, my son, for all this day I have felt that some great calamity is impending, and I have not a single cash to offer as a sacrifice to the gods, who alone have power to avert it. Aih-yah!"

Quan Quock Ming looked about him apprehensively, peering this way and that into the darkness, opening and closing his hands convulsively and breathing brokenly, until I was nearly dead with fright. And then, quite providentially, I thought of the silver coin my mother had given me, and offered it to him, crying:

"Take this quickly! Will it be sufficient?"

He seized it and ran toward the lower part of the ship, leaving me terror-stricken to grope my way through the awful darkness.

I found Quan Quock Ming lying upon his berth in placid and languid content. His eyes were bright and his brow unfurrowed as he smiled upon me, and said:

"My son, my pipe is warm, there is opium in my box, there is oil in my lamp and there is confidence in my heart, for the evil spirits no longer pursue."

CHAPTER VI

THE VISION IN THE "LONG DRAW"

OF the first days of the voyage I remember little, save that I wanted to die and feared to do so lest I disturb Quan Quock Ming, who lay torpid with opium in the berth below. The sizzling of the drug and the puffing of smoke merely punctuated his stupor of deathly stillness, for there are no sighs in an opium-smoker's dreams. As my sickness began to leave me I felt such a hunger as Fong Fah had mentioned, but it was as much of the eyes and the ears as of the mouth; and after I had devoured a dish of smoked herring and rice and had licked out my bowl, I listened eagerly to my countrymen chattering over their evening meal like children over their New Year *lichee* nuts.

"At the next full moon," said one, "we shall be in the land of the *fan quai*, who drink as much *sam shu* at home as in Canton, and are as stupid at bargaining."

"All one has to do to earn money," said another, "is to wash soiled linen or roll tobacco leaves. I am told one receives as much as a thousand cash for a single day's labor."

"If one does not care to work for coined silver," said a third, "he is free to go where he will and wash out the rough gold, as pure as the bracelets of a singing girl."

"And the grains of gold are larger and more plentiful than grains of rice up the river," declared another.

All talked much of their homes, their families and their honorable ancestors, and of the trivial things that had happened to them and to their kinsmen. Then I heard Quan Quock Ming, who held himself aloof from his countrymen, mutter:

"The fools prattle of gold, and gold is dropping from their lips," but to me there seemed to be little wisdom in that remark.

In the days that followed he smoked less and wrote often in a large book I had given him at his request, with the ink and brush I had lent him on his suggestion; for he explained that the book could be of no use to him without the brush and the ink, and they could be of no service to me without the book—which was quite true. When he was not reading what he had already written he was splitting bamboo into slender strips, such as are used in large fans, smoothing them carefully and placing on each with India ink characters that meant nothing at all to me, but nevertheless appeared very important and mysterious.

One evening when the others had gone to enjoy their pipes in the open air, I hung my head over the edge of my berth to watch Quan Quock

Ming cook his opium, and he was talking to himself in low growling tones, saying:

"I shall neither soil my hands with dirty linen nor roll the coarse tobacco leaf for the *fan quai* so long as I can roll the juice of the poppy bloom for myself. Nor shall I burrow in the earth like a mole, or guzzle in the mud like a duck, even for grubs of gold. Let my countrymen have all of that," and I considered it very generous of him to leave all of the gold for the others.

Quan Quock Ming gave the warm opium its last roll on the bowl of the pipe and placed it over the vent. He stretched his limbs out a little, shifted his body to ease the shoulder upon which he had been lying, licked his lips, pressed the stem of the pipe against them and held the opium over the lamp. As he inhaled the fumes slowly and mightily his face purpled and his chest swelled, but not so much as a thimbleful of smoke escaped until the sizzling and the sucking had consumed the last grain.

Open-mouthed and breathless I had been watching him take the "long draw," and was just gathering a fresh breath when his nose wiggled rabbitlike, and his nostrils spread, and then twin blasts of nauseous vapor nearly strangled me. I fell back on my berth choking and gasping, and I thought of the dragon of China slaying with its breath. There was a great weight upon my stomach (which was very cold) that held my body to the bed, while my head (which was very

hot) rolled about so loosely that the ship went with it, threatening to capsize and drown us all. But I thought it did not matter much.

Quan Quock Ming rose and strutted to and fro with shoulders back and head erect, for he had taken just enough to soothe the nerves that clamored and to stimulate the mind that lagged. His eyes were big and bright and his voice was deep and strong as he soliloquized:

"What if you were born in a sampan? What if your first breath was a gasp from a ducking in the muck-laden waters of the Pearl river? What if you have no money, no womenfolks, no ancestors and a bad *fung shui*? You are no longer a garbage-fed scavenger of the river—a filthy duck without wings. You are a man with a strong body and a subtle mind. You have read the Four Books and the Five Classics, and they should teach you not only right living but good living, and both without physical exertion or mental fatigue. You should acquire wealth and achieve fame, and have fine progeny to conserve the one and preserve the other. Men are fools; make men your tools."

Of this I am certain: From that "long draw" came all that afterward happened to Quan Quock Ming.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROPHET SPEAKS

My countrymen had finished their evening meal, washed their bowls and laved their hands, and one of the family of Lee had used the hand towel of one of the family of Chin—a very filthy thing to do. The two quarreled noisily over it, and had already wound their queues around their heads when Quan Quock Ming spoke:

“You are fools,” he said so quietly and decisively that the quarrel, which seemed so important a moment before, was instantly forgotten. “You are fools to quarrel over that which may never be—the disease that one may get from another’s towel; and you disturb the tranquillity of those who have given no offense to either of you. It is only from a tranquil mind that wisdom flows, for he who so orders and composes his intelligence that he is undisturbed by the present, lives wholly in the past and in the future; and he who knows all that lies behind can see all that stretches before. If you knew what the future holds for you, you would not be quarreling over such a trifle as a filthy towel.”

Before either could réply Quan Quock Ming drew from beneath his mattress the slips of bamboo, shook them loosely in his hands and ordered each to select one, saying:

"I know naught of you, naught of your ancestry, and naught of your destiny, but with these question sticks you interrogate the gods, and they reveal all to me. I am but their interpreter."

He carried the sticks to the light and studied the characters inscribed upon them, muttering mysterious words that had the sound of those I once heard a white foreign devil utter when he fell into a hole in a street of Canton.

"You are the son of Chin You Do, of Chin Bin village, Sun Ning district," he said to the Chin man. "When you were twenty-nine days old you were given the milk name of Ah Sam, for you were the third child. After the smallpox had marked your face you were called Tow Pai by your friends and relatives. When you were sent to the schoolmaster you were given the book name of Chin Din, and when you were married you took the name of Chin Foo Wing. Your wife is Wong Yoke, and you have two children—a boy and a girl. You broke your arm by falling over a dog, and your father, who was a prosperous farmer, once had two pigs and seventeen ducks. Is it not so?"

Chin Foo Wing could only open and close his mouth in astonishment, but a bolder person said:

"Chin Foo Wing has told us all that."

"What Chin Foo Wing tells you, that you *believe*; what the gods tell me, that I *know*," said Quan Quock Ming sternly. "Has Lee Jung also told you of the knife that he has hidden in his sleeve, and with which he intended to kill Chin Foo Wing? Shall I tell you more of these two men?"

"Sir scholar, I lied about the ducks," confessed Chin Foo Wing.

"I was about to speak of that. Your father had eight ducks one year and nine another, which made seventeen."

"*Hi low!*" assented Chin Foo Wing at once, being very glad to learn that he had not lied so very much after all concerning his father's wealth.

"My son," said Quan Quock Ming to Lee Jung, "a misfortune, which cannot be averted, is impending. You will meet with an accident soon, and it will be painful but not grave."

Then he told them of other things that lay in the future—provided all went well during the voyage, and no misfortunes overtook them in the land of the *fan quai*.

"Sir scholar, would you accept from one so mean and ignorant a silver coin for oil and punks to burn at the altar of your illustrious ancestors?" asked Lee Jung.

"And also from one so low and humble as I?" begged Chin Foo Wing.

Each bowed three times in the giving, and Quan Quock Ming accepted with gracious alac-

city, which seemed peculiar when I remember his telling me that he had lost his ancestral tablets and had no ancestors to worship.

"Now," said he, "permit me to retire to my meditations and prayers, and disturb not my tranquillity lest you offend the gods."

Every head was bowed low and all eyes were cast down while the sage walked slowly and solemnly to his bed, and all kept very still while he was composing himself in his berth, scarcely daring to look upon his broad back. One whispered to me that I might place my foot upon his berth in climbing into mine, so as not to profane the resting-place of the prophet; and Lee Jung, observing that his chest occupied a little of the space in front of Quan Quock Ming's berth, moved it softly to its proper place. All went silently and stealthily to their beds, and later on those who were awakened by their own snoring started up in fear and cast apprehensive glances toward the resting-place of the prophet. But the gods doubtless knew that he had two silver coins for sacrificial oil and punks, and permitted him to sleep undisturbed.

My countrymen agreed that Quan Quock Ming must be a man of great piety and wisdom, for he had the serenity of a Buddhist priest, he quoted the teachings of Confucius, he worshiped the Taoist gods, and he followed the precepts of all three religions; but that was not strange, as none but the wisest priests can say where one begins

and another leaves off. All talked much of his marvelous revelations, disputed as to his exact words, argued as to the source of his wisdom, and discussed the matters he might reveal, the consequences that might follow and the marvelous power of one so gifted; and all wondered why he had taken his departure from the land of exalted wisdom, merciful gods and beneficent ancestors.

Observing that the men no longer gambled in the evenings, but sat and smoked in silence, he said:

"My sons, do not let my presence interrupt your innocent and harmless diversions, for time hangs heavily upon the hands of all who are ignorant of the past and blind to the future. Therefore resume your *fan tan* and *pai gow*, and do not fear to disturb me."

Made bold by his tolerance, many sought his counsel and advice daily, and all heard astonishing things of the past and amazing things of the future; but from listening much I learned that there is much uncertainty concerning the things that are to be, because they depend upon the whims of the gods rather than upon a fate that is worked out like a sum in mathematics; and one must be very careful not to offend them or omit frequent sacrifices lest something unexpected and disagreeable happen. Therefore, as Quan Quock Ming explained, one really needs to be told of his past not at all, but he should seek to learn the future frequently; and he told the bankers of

the games (who always won), "Good luck attends you to-day," and the players (who usually lost), "Fortune will be against you, so do not play to-day."

In return for the great service rendered none could do less than offer him a tael of silver for each fortune told, and this he always wrapped in red joss paper to cast into the sea, for many said they had seen the paper thrown when the prophet thought he was not observed and the coin must have been in it. That was well, for a terrible storm arose and threatened the destruction of the ship, and it was only after each man of the company had given five taels as a sacrifice to the sea god and Quan Quock Ming had offered many prayers for our safety that we were saved.

At the same time the prediction that Lee Jung would meet with an accident was fulfilled in this manner: While the prophet was worshiping the storm gods and interceding for us, he commanded Lee Jung to close the door at the top of the stairs in the wind god's face; but the god was angry and struck the door a mighty blow the instant Lee Jung took hold of it, forcing him back; and as his feet touched the top step they suddenly went from under him and his body shot out into the air. I turned my face away, but I heard him scream and I heard him fall; and when I looked again he was lying quite still with one leg doubled under him.

In an hour the storm was over, and the surgeon

of the ship was putting splints on Lee Jung's leg, and everyone was saying:

"It is miraculous! Quan Quock Ming is a great prophet, and he has saved our lives!"

I was running up the steps after the storm to look at the sea when I slipped at the top one, upon which someone had carelessly dropped pieces of soap, and nearly broke my leg too. This the prophet had not predicted, doubtless because I was a mere child and had not sacrificed five taels.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORKING OF A MIRACLE

WHEN the vessel lay at an island port for twenty-four hours several went ashore, Quan Quock Ming among them, and visited our countrymen, many of whom had taken black islanders for temporary wives. The first evening after our departure Eastward the prophet, who seemed more gracious than usual, said to Fong Kit, the owner of the girl Fong Fah:

"Come, my son. I have never told you whether you are to have good or bad fortune."

After much persuasion and a great deal of reluctance Fong Kit selected one of the question sticks.

"Aih-yah! What could be worse!" exclaimed Quan Quock Ming almost as soon as he had glanced at it. "A great calamity is impending. Because of your wickedness you have angered the gods and brought all of us into great danger. Haie!" He shook his head and frowned.

"What is it, sir scholar?" asked several as they cast menacing glances at Fong Kit.

"This wicked man bought a widow's daughter for half a mat of rice, promising to adopt her as his daughter and not to sell her as a servant or a

slave, else he would have been compelled to give a whole mat of rice. He offered her for sale in the land of the black islanders, but haggled over the price because he was told that he could get more money for her in the land of the white *fan quai*. Now the curse of the gods is upon him and upon all of his family, and even upon the girl, for she is properly his adopted daughter. They have sent evil spirits to give him the small-pox, and he is spreading it among you."

"But he and all the rest of us have had it, sir scholar, and surely we cannot have it again," said one.

"The *fan quai* are in great fear of it, for they do not pass it from one child to another as we do; and if they find it among us we shall be cast into the sea, or at the very least sent back to China. To-morrow the pestilence will appear upon the face of Fong Kit *for the second time*. I have said it."

"Aih-yah! Kill him! Throw him into the sea before the *fan quai* see him!" they shouted, and Fong Kit clung to the prophet's leg, begging to be saved from his countrymen, from the wrath of the gods and from the evil spirits, and promising to do anything that might be asked of him to avert such a great misfortune as threatened his countrymen.

"I shall do what I can, but it is a very difficult matter," said Quan Quock Ming, shaking his head as though he were without hope.

Then he wrote "Yee Ling," the name of the god of medicines, upon a slip of red paper and placed it over the altar in the living places, as we had no figure of the joss on the ship; and then he worshiped for a long time. Afterward he took a vial of oil, and pouring some of it upon another piece of joss paper, anointed Fong Kit upon the forehead and around the mouth, for it is at these points that the disease first shows itself.

"Now, my sons, retire each to his resting-place and await the issue," commanded the prophet.

It is perfectly true that by the very next morning the disease had appeared upon Fong Kit's face.

Being but a child I was permitted to go to the women's quarters and had seen much of Fong Fah and had spoken freely with her, though it would have been very immoral for her to converse with a man; and I was very sorry to learn that more misfortune had come to one who had endured so much. She worshiped the Mother of Heaven often, and she never spat toward the north, stared long at a rainbow or at the moon, nor sighed in front of the cooking furnace, and it did not seem right that one so full of filial piety and reverence for the gods should be cursed for the sins of her foster parent. As she had grown quite plump and appeared very contented, though never really happy, I thought it probable that she did not know that she was accursed and would be

very glad to learn of the matter, if it were told to her gently.

"Have you heard any strange noises lately?" I asked.

"Certainly," she answered. "One hears little else upon this great boat."

"Well, have you seen any strange things about?"

"Truly; everything is strange among the *fau quai*. The women all say that these wonderful things could not have been done by men alone, but they must have had the help of the great God, Sheung Tai. Still they must be very clever to find a way to get Him to help them."

"Yes, I have heard the men say the very same thing," said I, "but that is not what I mean. Have you heard, or seen, or felt anything that might be the work of evil spirits?"

"How can one so ignorant as I tell what is good and what is evil among all these strange things? Are you wise enough to tell me?"

It angered me to be mocked by her when I knew so much and she so little of a matter that was of such importance to her, so I replied:

"You had best keep your eyes and ears open and say many prayers to your woman's god, for something is going to happen to you."

"What is it? Am I to be sent back up the river, or is there a famine on the boat?"

"I don't know what will happen, but evil spirits

will make you pay for the wickedness of Fong Kit. The prophet has said it."

"I have paid for the sins of my own ancestors and now I must pay for Fong Kit's. Well, it is my duty, I suppose, if I am now his daughter. I shall go at once and worship the woman's god."

Each of my countrymen gave Quan Quock Ming ten taels of silver for sacrifices, and after spending three days and nights in prayers and supplications, he said:

"My sons, the gods have been obdurate, but at last they have yielded and have shown me a way. It is more important that all of you should have happy and prosperous lives than that I, who have a bad *fung shui*, should seek to live in peace and tranquillity before I have restored my father's bones to the desecrated tomb and earned the beneficent protection of the spirit that guards them. Let the accursed Fong Fah be clothed in white with the red cloth about her head as for the marriage ceremony, and have her brought hither upon the back of her foster mother. I am commanded by the gods, in order to save you, to marry Fong Fah and share her misfortunes. I shall not require the letter of three generations from Fong Kit, for I know Fong Fah's ancestry better than he; but if he demands it of me"—his voice grew loud and stern—"I shall give him a letter of three hundred generations."

How his ancestors had been restored to him I never learned, as Fong Kit declared he would

not think of demanding that their illustrious names should be exhibited like a Hongkong laundryman's list of soiled linen; but I suppose Quan Quock Ming found them with the question sticks.

Fong Fah was carried in upon the back of Fong Kit's wife and placed in Quan Quock Ming's berth, for everyone knows that it is very bad luck for a bride's feet to touch the floor until she has reached the inner chamber of her husband's home, and that was the only home Quan Quock Ming had. As soon as her red cloth had been taken from her head she began eating of the wedding nuts and candies that had been thrown upon the berth, and when Quan Quock Ming was seated she knelt at his feet and gave him the two cups of wine. As he drank them Fong Fah munched candy and smiled, appearing very young and beautiful and not at all like one accursed.

"Should I not be very happy?" she asked of me, as though she had heard my thoughts.

"To get so fine a husband?"

"No; to get such good things to eat."

It was miraculous that Fong Kit recovered within two days, and not another mark was placed upon his face. But the prophet did not really cast the sacrifice money into the sea, for I heard it jingle in his pockets as we were leaving the ship, and when I spoke of it he said:

"I am saving it to sacrifice all at once to the tutelary gods at the temple."

Thus it was that Quan Quock Ming, who departed from China without a copper cash, without womenfolk, without ancestry and altogether unknown, arrived in the land of the *fan quai* with more than a thousand taels of silver, a young wife, three hundred ancestors and a great reputation for piety and wisdom.

CHAPTER IX

THE COMING OF THE LAW

WHEN I boasted to my uncle of the remarkable friend I had found, and told him how Quan Quock Ming had left China without money, without womenfolk and without ancestors; how he had foretold many marvelous things; how he had saved our lives quite miraculously; and how he had arrived in the land of the *fan quai* with much money, a young wife and three hundred ancestors, my uncle smiled knowingly and said:

"He must be a very clever man."

"He is a very wise priest and a great prophet," said I, but my uncle merely wagged his head doubtfully, though there came a time long afterward when he said quite seriously:

"Quan Quock Ming is either a very great prophet or a very clever man; and there is little difference, my son."

For a few days after our arrival there was much discussion among my people concerning the extraordinary events of the voyage, all who had seen and heard Quan Quock Ming, saying "prophet," and all who had not saying "man." Then, as the former were few and the latter many, and all had much else to think of and to

talk about, he became just as another Chinese and was almost forgotten. But I met him on the street one day as I was about to buy some sugarcane, and he spoke kindly to me and I politely to him. That he remembered me at all was surprising; but when he told me he had never forgotten me and at that very moment had a luck charm he had made for me, it was astonishing; and when Quan Quock Ming explained to me the necessity of making a small sacrifice at the Tien How temple to make the charm more potent, I was glad to give him the ten-cent piece my uncle had given me.

Then he told me in a few words that he had sacrificed every cent of his money to the gods, but they had in no wise relented; that evil spirits still pursued him and his accursed wife, Fong Fah—him, because of the wickedness of those who had desecrated his father's grave and brought to him a bad *fung shui*, and her, because of the iniquity of her foster-father—and that their misfortunes continually multiplied.

"Just see what has happened now!" he exclaimed with great bitterness. "The swine of a woman has borne me a pig of a daughter."

Then he asked if I were attending school; and when I said I was not, he generously offered to instruct me in the classics if I could induce my uncle to pay the cost and could procure some other pupils. As there were few teachers and many boys I got about twenty to go to him, and

to compensate me he gave me the seat of honor at his left. He was a conscientious instructor and forced his pupils to work diligently, especially in the practice of writing, saying:

"Write all you know of your illustrious ancestry, and when you have done that write of your good friends and their honorable ancestors and of your bad enemies and their wicked progenitors, and of all that happens daily. Write of everything that you hear and see, for writing is very important."

We did as we were commanded, and Quan Quock Ming manifested always a keen, kindly and patient interest in all that we wrote, reading it carefully, asking many questions and making corrections where we had made errors, and seeming never to tire in his efforts to get us to observe, to inquire and to record. He often commended us for our diligence and rarely had occasion to reprove us for idleness or stupidity. He seldom beat us on the heads with his stick, and even on such occasions expressed profound regret that his tender heart would not permit him to punish us with deserved severity. Only once within my recollection did he become exceedingly angry, and that was when Hong Yee, who had received instruction in the school of the foreigners, wrote of a friend he had never seen named Jesus, the Son of God who was the first ancestor of the Chinese as well as the *fan quai*.

"Haie—e!" roared Quan Quock Ming. "You

are an unfilial little beast!" and he gave Hong Yee a tremendous thrashing. "That will teach you not to believe what the *fan quai* tell you, for they are very impious and great liars as well. Everyone knows that there is no family in the Middle Kingdom of the surname of God, and if there ever had been such an ancestor His memory would have been preserved by His descendants."

To be starved in China or stoned in America was the alternative that confronted my countrymen, so they came to a strange and inhospitable land and faced the angry foreign devils, smiling much and complaining little as they took bread and stones together. Having no official to speak for them, either to beg tolerance or to demand justice, they formed themselves into societies, according to the district whence they came, for their mutual benefit and protection; and when the presidents of these societies met together to consider matters of moment affecting all Chinese alike they were known as the Six Companies. But even they could not obtain justice, and in consequence there was much discontent among my people.

When the Six Companies ordered a great public meeting to discuss the matter, Quan Quock Ming, who had been mentioned frequently as a man of great learning and wisdom, though his face was scarcely known, was invited to attend; and everyone was astonished when he strode in

quite late and, without pausing even to look to the right or the left or to make the usual salutations, took the seat of honor at the left of the president, Lee Tsi Bong, but his appearance was so impressive that none of the other presidents dared to ask him to take a lower seat, though they scowled with displeasure.

Through the whole meeting he sat on the edge of his chair with his knees wide apart and a hand on each, his shoulders straight, his head erect and his eyes fixed upon the scrolls from the classics that hung on the wall opposite; and Lee Tsi Bong seemed to shrink and Quan Quock Ming to expand with each moment that passed, until all spoke toward him, though he noticed them no more than a joss would a rag-picker or a woman.

“Honorable sirs,” spoke Lee Tsi Bong, “this is a strange country of strange people and strange ways; a country where men respect even a big-footed woman but have no reverence for their elders; where women are permitted to associate with men in public places and even to transact business; where no one worships his ancestors, and few have ancestors to worship; where all touch the filthy hands of one another on meeting instead of each shaking his own; where men take off their hats instead of their shoes on entering the home of a friend; where all have pale sickly faces and staring eyes, and the men have big beards and bald heads; where young men have the effrontery to wear beards before they

have lived forty years; where every one boasts loudly of much law and great justice for all, though there is none for us. Now what can we do about all this?"

"The *fan quai* have many magistrates," said Chew Foo, the interpreter, "and lawyers are as numerous and as busy as cockroaches in a kitchen. Each has many rooms filled with books, and every book is filled with laws upon every subject that men may dispute over—even laws concerning the driving of horses, the catching of shrimps, the picking of chickens, the beating of wives and all such trifling matters. Yet, when we have disputes and buy a big lawyer at a high price, we often lose, though we have plenty of money to pay the magistrate."

"Now I would like to know what sense there is in buying a lawyer to lose a case, when one can just as well lose without paying a copper cash!" shouted Jeong Chuey, the merchant, and everyone said:

"*Hi low!* That is true!" and all nodded their heads many times.

"Even when a magistrate is paid by us to decide a cause in our favor," continued Chew Foo, "another magistrate says he was wrong and orders him to decide against us, but we never get our money back. There is a magistrate for widows and orphans, a magistrate for promissory notes and other debts, a magistrate for gambling and a magistrate for murder, and there are

still other magistrates over all these to say that the lesser magistrates are ignoramuses. There are magistrates for the city, for the district, for the province and for the whole country. Our disputes are taken from one to another, and before each a lawyer reads from his books saying the law is thus and so; and then the opposing lawyer reads from other books saying it is not thus and so, but this and that. The magistrate listens, finally saying what the law is, and then the lawyer who is dissatisfied takes the matter before another magistrate, who says that the first made a mistake. If anyone ever finds out what the law is, there are other officials who change it at once, so that no one ever knows it, though it is the law that everyone must know it. So if you pause to look into the window of a *fan quai* and a foreign devil kicks you, you say to yourself: 'That must be a new law' and you pass on. It is not so in our country, for there the law is certain, the decision prompt and the punishment swift."

"Chew Foo speaks truly," said Chin Dock, the butcher, "but he is from Canton and knows more of magistrates and less of law than we who are from the interior. In the coast cities men of all families, the Wongs, the Lims, the Lees, the Louies and the Chins, are intermingled, but in the interior districts each family has a village of its own, in which none but clansmen live; and the heavenly dynasty expects each fam-

ily to do all things that are necessary to regulate itself, so the elders of the villages sit as judges and administer the law among their own kinsmen. When they decide, all must obey, for that is the law."

"That is quite true," spoke Wong You, "for when Wong Yick killed Wong Lock and fled to the rice-fields his father and grandfather were at once imprisoned by the elders of the village of the Wongs, and the very next day, as Wong Yick had not surrendered himself, they were taken out to the river to be drowned. Everyone knows that such a law is just and proper, for the elders of a family, who must be obeyed, are responsible for the conduct of their direct descendants. When the weights had already been tied to their feet, and everyone was saying 'What an unfilial and impious son Wong Yick is to let his elders die this way,' and all stood with their heads bowed in shame for Wong Yick, he came running from the fields and was drowned at once, thus saving the family's face and proving that he was a good son. And it was all a matter that concerned only the family of Wong, and in which neither the magistrates nor other families had any interest."

"I remember once," spoke Lim Toy, "that a Lee man was killed in the village of the Lims, and the elders of the Lee village complained to the elders of the Lim family, demanding that the slayer be killed or that the village pay the

relatives of the Lee man one hundred taels of silver as compensation. But the elders of the Lim village proved that the Lee man had visited a married woman of the Lim village when her husband was not at home, and the elders of the Lee village were forced to say: 'It is right that he should have been killed, for that is a terrible crime, and we bow our heads in shame.' But had it not been proven, the Lim village would have been forced to pay the money, or the Lee men would have been quite right in killing an elder of the Lim village; and they would have killed man for man until peacetalkers from a friendly village could arrange a compromise.

"In these things no one complains to the magistrates, for all learned many centuries ago that they imprison and torture litigants, those in the right as well as those in the wrong, and the witnesses for both sides, until they and all their clansmen have not a single cash left. Then perhaps all are punished for making so much bother. So it has come to be the law that family matters shall be settled by the families. Thus justice is done, and peace and good order are maintained."

"*Hi low!*" shouted Chew Foo. "But how is it in this country? If a Lim kill a Lee the *fan quai* interfere and take him to prison. The magistrate of deaths says he killed the Lee man; the magistrate of small crimes says he killed the Lee man; the magistrate of great crimes and his

twelve assistants say he killed the Lee man; and after a year or two the great magistrate say he killed the Lee man, but it was not properly proven. Then the lesser magistrate and his assistants again say that he killed the Lee man, and in another year or two the greater magistrates say that he did not kill the Lee man, but if he did, it was not proven. Then the Lim man is released, though you all know it is the law of our country that he who kills another must prove he is innocent. And that is a very good law, for who knows so much about the matter as the one who commits the crime?"

"But that is not the worst of the matter," spoke Lee Tsi Bong. "Everyone knows that no good luck can come from the spirit of a relative if his body be buried before his murderer is punished. You may as well bury one with his feet to the north and be done with it. Now, how can we keep our relatives unburied for three or four years while lawyers and magistrates dispute about the matter? It is very unreasonable to expect such a thing. Without a doubt, sir scholar, whose honorable surname I am told is Quan, you can advise us wisely upon this perplexing matter."

Quan Quock Ming sat for a moment as though he had not heard, and then rose with great deliberation and took from beneath his long coat the question sticks with which he interrogated the gods when telling fortunes. He shook them

in his hands and held them toward Lee Tsi Bong, who selected one.

"I know naught of you, naught of your illustrious ancestors, naught of your business affairs, and naught of all the things that perplex you," he said as he took the stick chosen by Lee Tsi Bong, "but this reveals all to me."

Then he took from his pocket a pair of large spectacles, which made him appear so important when they were on the end of his nose that no one thought of the discourtesy, and through them he studied the mysterious characters on the stick, while everyone kept very still waiting for the sage to speak. At last he raised his chin high and looking at Lee Tsi Bong through his spectacles, said:

"You are Lee Tsi Bong, son of Lee Soo Doon, and he was the son of Lee King Chong. You are a merchant, your father was a merchant, and your grandfather was a merchant; and all of you have prospered, except that your grandfather's store in Canton was once burned, and you were once cheated by a foreign devil in this country, whereby you lost \$1200. Is it not so?"

"*Hi low*," assented Lee Tsi Bong, while many others murmured "marvelous," "wonderful," and similar words, for all that Quan Quock Ming had said was quite true.

"All that lies behind you in your life and in the lives of your ancestors," continued the sage,

"is revealed by this question stick, but it is of more important matters that lie in the future that you would know. They are equally clear and certain, provided you follow the *tao*—the way—but if you turn to the right or to the left, you may offend the spirits of your ancestors, and their malignant influence will change all."

Everyone had risen and many had pressed forward to hear more distinctly all that he might say, and when he observed it he frowned upon the people and waved them back with his hands, so that all took their seats hastily and stretched their necks greatly. When all were still again he said:

"This is a very simple matter. If the gods of the *fan quai* are not beneficent, worship your own; if the attire of the *fan quai* is not comfortable, wear your own; if the food of the *fan quai* is not savory, eat your own; if the law of the *fan quai* is not reasonable, make your own—and live in peace and comfort. Is that not wisdom?"

"*Hi low!*" shouted everyone, and all nodded their heads many times.

"The great master said: 'To govern simply by statute, and to reduce all to order by means of pains and penalties, is to render the people evasive and devoid of any sense of shame.' So let all of the surname of Wong form one *tong*; all of the surname of Lee another, and all of the surname of Lim another, until each family shall

have its own society governed by the elders. Then, though you of different families mingle under the same roof, you will still have your village law and government, so that when a Chin man wrongs a Chin man, complaint may be laid before the elders of the Chin family *tong* for settlement; and when a Wong man wrongs a Lee man, the elders of the Lee family man complain to the elders of the Wong family, and the matter may be adjusted. If the elders refuse to do justice, let those of the complaining family proceed as they would in their own country. But let no one complain to the *fan quai* officials or magistrates, but let all submit their own affairs to their own people for adjustment under their own laws."

Everyone shouted his approval, and all pressed forward to converse at greater length with the philosopher, but he walked out of the meeting-place with long, slow strides, keeping his eyes straight ahead of him and saying not another word, though many important persons addressed him and sought by questions to detain him.

CHAPTER X

THE LAW OF THE CLAN

THE Chins, the Wongs, the Lees and the Lims were numerous, and the *tong* of each family was strong; but the Quans, the Loos, the Jeongs and the Chews were few, so they united in one society, naming it the Tin Yee, or Four Family *tong*, and taking an oath of great solemnity that bound them together as brothers of one clan.

Chew Foo had been in this country long and spoke the language well, so he found profitable employment as a *chut fan* in dealings with the *fan quai*; but when there were few complaints to the magistrates, interpreters earned little money. Then he began to whisper to the officials, to the writers of news and to the missionaries concerning the doings of the gamblers and slave dealers, receiving pay for his tales and making much trouble for my people, for the foreign devils had made crimes of the things that had been lawful among us for centuries.

Chew Foo had always a double face. To the *fan quai* he was a Christian who abhorred the ways of gamblers and slave dealers, and to the Chinese he was a believer in our gods and our laws who hated the meddlesome foreign devils.

He sang songs and said prayers at the mission, offered sacrifices and took oaths at the Tien How temple, played *fan tan* in the gambling-houses and drank *sam shu* with the slave girls, all in one day; and though he was greatly suspected he was so sly that none could get proof against him, so he lived, had sons and prospered.

Chew Foo was strolling through the small streets at night when a slave girl, whom he had never seen before, smiled upon him through her grated wicket, and he paused to speak with her.

"Your face is as beautiful as the full moon," he said.

"What is your honorable surname?" she asked, still smiling at the compliment.

"I am of the family of Chew," he replied.

"I, too, am of that family."

She quickly drew her curtain, for it is a heinous crime, and the proper punishment is death, for any man to take as his wife or slave one of his own clan, even though their common ancestor may have been dead two thousand years.

Chew Foo often walked that way, just to see her face in passing, always saying to himself: "How unfortunate!" One evening he spoke to her softly and kindly.

"Your life is **very** hard for one so young and beautiful," he said. "Why not leave it for a better?"

"What can I do? Where can I go?" she asked.

"To the *fan quai* mission home."

"No, no! Everyone tells me that girls are taken there only to be tortured and killed."

"That is a wicked lie to frighten you. There a pleasant home will be provided you, instruction in many useful things will be given you, only pleasant tasks will be imposed upon you, and very soon a fine husband will be found for you. I can have the woman of the mission come for you early in the morning, when your owner and the old woman who guards you are sleeping. Will you go?"

"I will go."

At the mission Chew Foo said long prayers and sang loud songs, and then told in whispers of the slave girl who wanted to escape. The woman of the mission went in the early morning, found the girl crouching on the dark stairs, crying and shivering with fright, and hurried her away in a carriage—but not to the mission.

"Her owner will run quickly and buy a lawyer, who will have her taken before a magistrate," whispered Chew Foo. "Many will be there to frighten her with threats, and she will say she does not want to stay in the mission. Then her owner will get her back. I will hide her in my own home until you can get a magistrate's paper saying that you may keep her as your daughter."

When Chew Foo took her in at the front door of his home, he smiled on the mission woman, saying: "I will keep her for you"; but when he took her out the back door and hid her in the foreign part of the city he smiled on the girl, saying: "I will keep you for myself."

The owner of the slave, a man of the family of Jeong, soon learned of the wickedness of Chew Foo, and he complained to the elders of the Four Family *tong*, saying:

"Chew Foo, a bond brother of our *tong*, has stolen my slave, and the family of Chew must reimburse me. He has taken her for a secondary wife, though she is of the same clan, but the family of Chew may deal with that unspeakable crime as it will."

The elders ordered Chew Foo to show his face and prove his innocence, but he knew he was guilty, and would surely be punished by the Chinese law. So he hurried to the woman of the mission, the writers of news and the *fan quai* officials, crying loudly that his wicked countrymen intended to kill the slave girl for escaping and him for aiding her, and begged for the protection of the *fan quai* law. And while all the foreign devils were smiling, nodding their heads and saying: "Chew Foo is a good Christian and must be protected," all his people were frowning, shaking their heads and saying: "Chew Foo is a bad Chinaman and must be punished."

When Chew Foo did not show his face at



When Chew Foo hid her in the foreign part of the city he smiled, saying, "I will keep you for myself"

the meeting of the Four Family *tong* the elders said:

"One of the family of Chew has stolen a slave from one of the family of Jeong, and it is proper that the family of Chew should pay \$2000 to the Jeong man. There is another matter which shame forbids us to mention. Let the family of Chew regulate itself."

Then the Quans, the Loos and the Jeongs departed silently and without the usual politeness, while the Chews sat with their heads bowed in shame and the waters of sorrow filling their eyes. It was long before any spoke, but the first was Chew Lim, the blood brother of Chew Foo.

"Honorable kinsmen," said he, "one of the family of Chew has wronged one of the family of Jeong. Therefore let each contribute according to his means, so we may promptly pay that which is justly due. Is that not proper?"

"*Hi low!*" answered all.

"The detestable one, whose name is too abhorrent to be mentioned, has also committed such an abominable crime that he has brought shame and disgrace upon all of his *hing ti* in this country. Wherever we go men speak in whispers and turn away, and we of the family of Chew are as lepers who have lost their faces, until he has been punished. It is the law that he and the filthy female shall die. Is it not so?"

"*Hi low!*"

"Then, though he is my elder brother, who alone of my family has sons to worship our honorable ancestors, I shall kill them both. Now let me take the oath of the punk."

Kneeling before the altar of the *tong*, with the punk between the palms of his hands, the burning end downward, he said:

"In order that we may dwell together harmoniously, that we may save the faces of our family, and that we may preserve the honored name of our ancestors, I swear that I will kill the one of the unspeakable name and the swinish woman. If I fail, may I die like this punk!" and he crushed the burning end upon the floor.

"That is good," said all, as they went their several ways, walking slowly with bowed heads; but they knew their heavy hearts would soon be lightened.

Chew Lim knocked lightly on the door of Chew Foo's home.

"Who is there?"

"Your younger brother, Ah Lim."

Chew Foo's wife opened the door to him, poured him a cup of tea and waited for him to speak.

"Where is my elder brother?" he asked.

"I do not know," she answered. "He is hiding somewhere in the foreign part of the city," and she began to cry.

"Why does he hide?"

"Do you not know that he foolishly took the slave of another without paying for her?"

"I know that you are a very bold woman to criticize your husband, especially for such a small thing."

"Can't something be done about it?"

"Yes, it can be arranged. When can I see him?"

"He comes home sometimes at night disguised as a foreigner. Wait and you may see him."

Chew Foo came, and he was filled with surprise and fear to find Chew Lim waiting for him.

"Elder brother, you have done a very foolish thing in stealing the slave of a bond brother," said Chew Lim, "and your *hing ti* are very angry with you, but I shall deal justly with you, for you are my elder brother and have sons. First tell me where this girl is, that I may send her where she belongs."

Chew Foo had not told his wife that the girl was of the Chew family, and when he thought his brother did not know it he became bolder.

"Why is the Jeong man talking so loudly about it? I will pay him when I get the money."

"Let the *hing ti* pay the Jeong one for his slave," said Chew Foo's wife, "and my honorable husband will repay them. Then let him take her for a secondary wife, for anyone can

see that I am no longer young or beautiful. My husband can provide well for two wives, so why should he not have them?"

"That is true," said Chew Lim.

"Yes, that is reasonable," said Chew Foo. "I earn much money and can repay the *hing ti* in a short time."

"I fear our family would grumble at the expense and the delay in repayment," said Chew Lim, "but I shall see what can be done."

It was very late when Chew Foo and Chew Lim, walking on the dark sides of the streets, went to Chew Foo's hiding-place, but the girl was waiting and gave them tea and noodles. Though the brothers conversed in a friendly way, and Chew Lim politely took no notice of her, still she was filled with fear and foreboding and cast many apprehensive glances toward him.

"Younger brother, walk slowly and sleep well," said Chew Foo when Chew Lim had taken the parting cup of tea.

"Elder brother, sleep long and soundly," replied Chew Lim, and his knife found Chew Foo's heart twice before he could fall or utter a cry.

The girl stared stupidly for a moment, then covered her face with her hands and sank to the floor, moaning and crying softly:

"I didn't know the people; I didn't know the

language; I didn't know what to do, or where to go."

"You shall go with him," said Chew Lim, and the blood of the cousins mingled on the floor.

The *fan quai* newspapers said a highbinder did it, and that is a strange word to me; the magistrate of deaths said he knew not who did it, and it was a strange crime to him; my countrymen said not a word, but they knew Chew Lim did it; and it was not strange to them. It was the law.

CHAPTER XI

THE MORTGAGED SLAVE GIRL

AIH-YAH! The newspapers of the foreign devils say that I am a highbinder. Hai-e-e! That is a very bad name for a good man, but a very good name for a bad man. It is perfectly true that I am a member of the Gai Sin Sear *tong*, and that is a fighting society. But I do not fight. When the hatchetmen of my *tong* go out to kill or to be killed, I help to pay the expenses and hide until the war is over.

When I wear the *fan quai* attire and speak the *fan quai* tongue the foreign devils say "Little Pete is a sport;" but my countrymen say "Fung Ching is a rich man." A highbinder finds more profit in blackmailing one who is wealthy and more honor in killing one who is conspicuous, and if it were not for the protection that my membership in a fighting *tong* assures, I could never keep the money I earn honestly by betting on running horses, playing *fan tan*, bribing officials and dealing in smuggled opium and slaves. Any highbinder could hold his weapon to my head, saying, "Give me your money," and I would have to give. If I should then complain to the *fan quai* officials I would lose my life as well as my money.

Highbinder! *Hai-e-e!* That is a strange word to the Chinese and a strange person to the foreign devils. No one knows the source of the word, but I know the origin of the person. Quan Quock Ming told me that many years ago.

When Quan Quock Ming showed my people in this country how to bring the law of the Middle Kingdom to the land of the *fan quai* and instructed them in the manner of applying it to their own affairs, all said:

"Quan Quock Ming is a sage."

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When he interrogated the gods with the aid of his question sticks, and wonderful things in the distant past and marvelous events in the near future were revealed, all said:

"Quan Quock Ming is a great prophet."

When, through frequent sacrifices to the gods and his knowledge of the ways of good and evil spirits, he averted great calamities, all said:

"Quan Quock Ming is a pious priest."

He was therefore consulted upon all matters of great importance, and though his profits from telling fortunes and giving advice grew with his reputation, he seemed indifferent to the opportunities to increase the one and enhance the other, but still devoted himself to the instruction of his young pupils in the classics. They always addressed him as Quan-foo-tsze—Quan, the Philosopher—just as the pupils of the great master, whom the *fan quai* ignorantly call Confucius, addressed him as Kung-foo-tsze.

"Quan-foo-tsze, what is a highbinder?" one of them asked of him.

"When one of the far East marries one of the far West, as your father did," replied Quan Quock Ming with great severity, "the offspring is wicked, as you are, and yields neither respect nor obedience to either parent. When the laws of the far East and the laws of the far West unite they produce the highbinder—a person who neither respects nor obeys any law but that of the *tong*, which is a law unto itself. This is the way of it:

"If one foreign devil steals from another, it is the law of the West that his hand shall be cut off? If one kicks another, is his foot beaten? If one bites another, are his teeth drawn? No; each man must control his own members, and if one of them does a wrong the whole man is punished.

"The *fan quai* religion teaches that if one's eye offends he shall put it out, and if his hand is wicked he should cut it off; but I never heard that anyone did that. If it is good religion, it is good law, and in the Middle Kingdom it is both religion and the law, but of the family instead of the individual, for there the family is the unit. The Heavenly Dynasty says to the family:

" 'Regulate yourself and keep your members in order, or the whole family shall be punished.'

"So when one commits a crime the family shouts:

"'He is wicked; kill him!' and the member is cut off.

"In the West the family cries:

"'He is insane; save him!' and neither the member nor the family is punished.

"So it happens that the foreign devil, thinking much of himself and little of his family, writes his personal name first (and that is peculiar); while a Chinese, thinking little of himself and much of his family, writes his family name first (and that is as it should be).

"But many mistakes and much confusion result when the people of the far East and of the far West, with their different laws and customs, come together. Once a foreign devil of the name of John killed a man of the family of Wong in Canton, and the fighting men of the Wongs, following the law of the family, hunted out another foreign devil named John and killed him. Expecting the family of John to retaliate, all of the family of Wong—and they were thousands—hid from the Johns for a long time.

"And Jue Toy, who was arrested in this country for theft, said to me when he came out of prison:

"'I told the foreign devils my name was Ah Toy, so they could not find and punish the elders of the family of Jue. All they could do was to send *me* to jail. Wasn't that a great joke on them!'

"The foreign devils who went to the Middle

Kingdom found the laws not to their liking, so they carried their own with them and established courts to administer them. When our people came to this country and found the laws distasteful, they brought their own and formed family societies to enforce them.

"Now if a foreign devil has a crushed finger to be amputated or an aching tooth to be drawn he does not do it himself, but employs a surgeon or a dentist to do it neatly. So, if a family among our people has some bad member to be beaten or killed, the elders do not soil their hands with the cudgel or the cleaver, but hire a fighting man to do it nicely; and if one family quarrels with another, each pays its fighting men to give blow for blow until one is whipped or a compromise is arranged.

"But whether a hatchetman in this country punished a member of his own family, or fought with the hatchetmen of another, the *fan quai* officials meddled in the matter and made the occupation of a fighting man more hazardous. Consequently such employment became honorable, profitable, and much sought after by the adventurous.

"In the beginning the family societies, with their hatchetmen, were powerful, and the law of the Middle Kingdom was well administered, but in time the fighting men became more numerous and formed a *tong* of their own. They blackmailed, killed and robbed, and no one dared to complain to the *fan quai* officials. Then other

hatchetmen formed other *tongs*, and the family societies had little to do but worship ancestors at the temple, care for the sick and aged and attend to such trifling matters as did not concern fighting men. And then scholars, farmers, laborers, merchants and gamblers had to join one or another of the fighting *tongs* to get the protection that their family societies could no longer give.

"There is always one law for the strong and another for the weak; and that is because the strong are able to say 'This is the law,' and the weak can only answer, 'Yes, that is the law.' The *tong* is stronger than the family, so there is no law for our people in this country but the law of the *tong*."

Quan Quock Ming spoke truly.

CHAPTER XII

THE WAR OF THE TONGS

OF all Wong Hung's slave girls Suey Sum seemed the happiest, so her owner gave her that name—Contented Heart. She was also the sauciest, therefore she was beaten often by the old woman who guarded her. She was the prettiest, consequently all men admired her greatly.

When Wong Hung was about to depart for his old home in the Middle Kingdom, there to strut before the villagers in fine attire and boast of his wealth, he said to Suey Sum:

"You have served me for the full four years of our contract, and it is my duty to fix a price at which you may buy yourself. You cost me \$2,000, but I will make the price \$1,800. From now on you may take all you earn, paying me for your board and lodging and three per cent a month interest upon the amount you owe for yourself until all is paid. You are a clever girl, and in a year you should be free."

From that moment Suey Sum thought of little but buying her freedom, and the men who gave her the most money or the finest jewelry were always most favored by her.

When Lee Fook, a hatchetman of the Bing

Kung tong, won at *fan tan*, his first thought was of Suey Sum, and he hurried to her, fingering the gold in his pockets and saying to himself:

"I will give her \$200, and she will think I am a very fine fellow."

But when Suey Sum, hearing the jingle of the coin, smiled upon him, he said:

"Accept this \$200 as a present and buy bracelets, for they can always be sold at a good price, and there is not so much danger that they will be stolen."

"If I had many friends as kind as you," said Suey Sum, "I could soon buy myself," and while they ate preserved fruits, drank tea and smoked cigarettes together she told him what her owner had said.

"Why do you not run away from Wong Hung and go to the *fan quai* mission?" asked Lee Fook. "When he returns and finds that he cannot get you back he will sell you to me at a very small price. Then you can leave the mission and go with me."

"That would mean only a change of owners without hastening my freedom," replied Suey Sum. "Besides, Wong Hung would make much trouble. Still, if he does not return, I may go rather than be sold to another."

Lee Fook did not forget that, and when he heard that Wong Hung was returning he hurried to the *fan quai* officials, who say what foreigners may come to this country, and whispered:

"Wong Hung is not a merchant as he pretends, but is really a keeper of slaves."

When Wong Hung found he would not be kept a prisoner until the matter could be decided, he sent this message to Suey Sum:

"Mortgage yourself for \$300, that I may buy a lawyer. Otherwise I may be sent back to the Middle Kingdom," and she borrowed the money from Chin Doon, a member of the Hop Sing *tong*.

When the *fan quai* officials decided that Wong Hung was not a merchant (though he really owned a twentieth share in a cigar stand), and ordered that he be sent back to the Middle Kingdom, he sold Suey Sum to Loo Yee for \$1,000. Chin Doon, the moneylender, was very angry that Loo Yee should have gotten such a fine bargain when he himself had counted on it, and he talked so loudly about his \$300 mortgage on Suey Sum that Jue Yoke, the interpreter, said he would lend her the money to pay the debt. But Suey Sum paid only \$200, keeping back \$100 to buy hair ornaments. Chin Doon demanded the remainder from Jue Yoke, and when the interpreter refused to pay it made complaint before a magistrate at San Jose, saying Jue Yoke had killed a man many years before.

When Jue Yoke was taken to prison the elders of the family of Jue sent a peace-talker to ask of Chin Doon:

"Why have you done this when you know very well that Jue Yoke did not kill the man?"

"Because he owes me \$100 that he guaranteed for a slave girl," replied Chin Doon, "and if the family does not pay it for him I shall have him hanged by the *fan quai* law."

When the family of Jue refused to pay, Chin Doon sent members of his *tong* to the magistrate to say:

"Yes, it is true that we saw Jue Yoke kill the man."

All that trouble cost Chin Doon \$250, but it cost Jue Yoke \$260 to prove that he was in the Middle Kingdom at the time of the killing and could not have done it. And then it cost Chin Doon \$150 more to prove that he had made an honest mistake about it and was not such a liar as should be sent to prison.

As soon as the jail doors opened for Jue Yoke he ran to his *tong* to complain of the wrong Chin Doon had done him, and it made complaint to the See Yup society, which is a high court composed of the presidents of twelve important *tongs* and which decides all questions of *tong* law. After hearing all that was to be said on both sides of the question the See Yups said:

"The slave girl, Suey Sum, was the cause of all the trouble. She should pay Jue Yoke the \$300 she borrowed as well as the expense of \$260 he incurred; and she should pay Chin Doon the

\$100 she still owes him as well as the \$400 expense he has been put to in the matter."

Lee Fook, the Bing Kung hatchetman, had urged Suey Sum many times to run away with him, and he became so angry at her refusals that he demanded of her the return of the \$200 he had given her to buy bracelets. At the same time the moneylender was clamoring for his \$500, the interpreter for his \$560, and her owner for the interest on what she owed for her freedom; and peace-talkers could do nothing at all, for every time they opened their mouths to speak of the matter all the creditors of Suey Sum would shout at once. While they were still quarreling Lee Fook went to Sacramento and made complaint to a magistrate saying that Suey Sum had stolen a bracelet from him, and had an official put her in prison at night, expecting to get her out by giving \$50 security, to take her quickly to Portland or Seattle and either keep her for himself or sell her at a profit. But her owner was quick in buying a lawyer, who got the magistrate to make the security \$1,000, and that was more than Lee Fook could pay. Then the owner, the money-lender and the interpreter hurried to Sacramento to get the girl and make trouble for Lee Fook; but the Bing Kung *tong* was very strong there, so they thought it better to have peace-talkers arrange a compromise. While Suey Sum was still crying in prison they all met, shouted about everything that had been done, and then signed a paper saying:

"Lee Fook shall tell the magistrate that it was all a mistake about the theft, and when the girl is released she shall return to her owner and pay first to Lee Fook the \$200 he gave her; then to Chin Doon, the moneylender, the \$500 she owes him; then to Jue Yoke, the interpreter, the \$560 due him; and then to Loo Yee, her owner, the \$240 expense he has been put to in this matter in addition to the principal and interest due him for her freedom."

The men were all satisfied, for that was good Chinese law, and Suey Sum was content, for there were rats in the prison. But Chin Doon, the moneylender, was a very wicked man, and when he had lost a great deal at *fan tan* he went at night and took all Suey Sum's bracelets, holding them as security for the money due him, though it had been agreed that Lee Fook should be paid first. Lee Fook would not eat a dumb man's loss, so he, without consulting his *tong*, chopped Chin Doon with a cleaver until he was quite dead.

In the time it takes to cook and smoke an opium pill everyone in Chinatown was saying:

"A Bing Kung has killed a Hop Sing, and war may begin at once."

The shopkeepers shook their heads and muttered:

"Hai-e-e! This is a bad business," and all who belonged to either *tong* quickly put up their shutters, locked their doors and hurried to *tong*

headquarters to learn what was to be done about it.

At the meetings of the *tongs* the laborers and business men were of one voice in saying:

"If there is war we must hide and neglect our affairs until it is over, or we shall be killed; and if we save our lives we still lose much money, as we must pay for rewards upon the heads of our enemies and for the defense of hatchetmen that may be arrested by the meddlesome *fan quai*. So let us make peace and save our money."

But the hatchetmen, who saw profitable employment in earning rewards, and the interpreters who saw big commissions in employing lawyers, shouted:

"Let us make war and save our faces."

The business men of the Hop Sing *tong* got peace-talkers from the Tin Yee *tong* to go to the Bing-Kungs and ask politely:

"Why has one of your hatchetmen killed a Hop Sing man?" and the Bing Kungs sent peace-talkers from the Suey Sing *tong* to answer courteously:

"It was because a Hop Sing man robbed a girl who owed a Bing Kung man, and the Hop Sing *tong* should see that the stolen bracelets are returned."

"That is not a very good reason for killing a man," replied the Hop Sings, and they asked the Bing Kungs to pay \$1,000 for the relatives of the dead man, and also to furnish the firecrackers and

roasted pork for a feast to show that they were in the wrong and were sorry.

"It is not reasonable to suppose that we could do such a thing," replied the Bing Kungs.

"Then we must kill a Bing Kung man," declared the Hop Sings, firmly but courteously. "It is only right that we should."

The peace-talkers went from one *tong* to the other, suggesting compromises, holding conferences and consuming a great deal of tea, noodles and opium at the expense of the *tongs*, and in time the Bing Kungs agreed to say nothing more about the bracelets, and the Hop Sings promised to withdraw the demand for money for Chin Doon's relatives; but neither *tong* wanted to lose its face, so neither would agree to provide the feast and firecrackers. Merchants on both sides were quite willing to pay for the feast in order to have peace, but each *tong* insisted that the other should give it.

"Let each *tong* give a banquet in turn," said the peace-talkers, but neither would provide the first.

"Then let the two *tongs* combine and give one feast for all, contributing an equal amount to the expense," they suggested, but it was perfectly clear that there could not be two seats of honor, and neither president would sit in the lower seat.

"Then let there be peace without a feast," advised some foolish person, but that was impossible, for there must be a feast when anything important is done, in order to make it binding, and

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this was very important. The hatchetmen were continually yelling: "Fight!" and the business men were always saying: "Wait!" but when it became certain that the peace-talkers could make no compromise the business men ran for their hiding-places and the hatchetmen ran for their guns.

CHAPTER XIII

THE Highbinder Woman

SOME of the fighting men attired themselves in the clothing of the *fan quai* and wore wigs over their queues, so they could approach their enemies without being recognized. Other stained their faces and dressed like farmers; others disguised themselves in the rags of beggars, and still others carried baskets of fruit or vegetables that they offered for sale. But somewhere in their rags or their baskets big guns were concealed, and they were looking more for someone to shoot than for someone to buy or give alms. Many of the boldest went out openly, undisguised and unarmed, for they knew the *fan quai* officials would search them; but each was followed by a very young boy or a very old man who carried a gun ready to pass to the fighting man when he should require it. Others took their stand in the doorways of cigar-stands owned by members of their *tong*, and watched for the coming of an enemy, while their weapons were within easy reach behind the counters.

Only those of the quarters who did not know that war had begun, or those who were compelled by the urgency of business, went on the streets,

for often men are killed by mistake, or by a bullet intended for another; and they tarried not a moment longer than was necessary. They saw fighting men loitering in the shadows or lounging in the doorways, looking sharply this way and that to avoid a shot in the back, or to put one in the back of another when no official was near. And whenever one heard the half-whispered warning of some watchful fighting man, "Pass quickly," he scurried from one doorway to another in deadly fear.

Written and spoken messages were sent by electricity to all places where there were Hop Sings or Bing Kungs, telling of the commencement of the war, and all who received them hurried to hide or to kill before their enemies could kill or hide.

When Lee Fook killed Chin Doon he fled to Oakland so that the *fan quai* officials could not find him, and was hidden away by members of his *tong*. He passed the time in smoking opium, telling how Chin Doon had squealed and boasting that he would kill the first Hop Sing if war should commence.

Lee Sam Yick, the president of the Hop Sings, was taking his evening meal at his home in Oakland, and no message of warning had yet reached him, when Lee Fook, who was of the same family, entered.

"Will you share my mean fare, younger cousin?" asked Lee Sam Yick politely, though he

knew Lee Fook was the Bing Kung fighting man who had caused so much trouble.

"No, venerable uncle," replied Lee Fook. "I have something for you," and he shot Lee Sam Yick dead.

That was not good law—it is not the law of the Middle Kingdom—that one should kill a member of his own family. That was the law of the *tong*. Cory Uchir

That same night a Bing Kung man was killed in Oakland and another in San Francisco; a Hop Sing man was killed in Sacramento and another in Los Angeles; and the next day a Bing Kung man was killed in Portland. Thus they had killed the same number—which is the law—but the Bing Kungs had killed a president, while the Hop Sings had not, and they must do so or lose their faces and be laughed at.

It is not alone with knives, cleavers and revolvers that hatchetmen fight. They have learned to use another weapon that puts an enemy out of the way for a time and sometimes kills. It is the *fan quai* law—the same that Chin Doon used against Jue Yoke. For every Hop Sing man that was killed three or four Bing Kungs were pointed out as the murderers and taken to jail; and for every Bing Kung man that died three or four Hop Sings were imprisoned; but of all these, scarcely one had anything to do with the actual killing of which he was accused. Nevertheless, *tong* members must serve the *tong*, and merchants

who cannot fight can give testimony, saying they saw the killing and that the prisoner did it.

And wherever there had been a killing or a robbery a long time before, and for which no one had been punished by the *fan quai* law, Bing Kung or Hop Sing interpreters hurried to buy papers of the magistrates accusing many John Does of doing these things; and officials carried these papers with them, so that whenever a Bing Kung man was pointed out by a Hop Sing, or a Hop Sing was pointed out by a Bing Kung, he was said to be the same John Doe named in the paper and was taken to prison. Thus a great many men were in jail, a great many lawyers were employed, and the interpreters, to say nothing of the magistrates who sold the papers and the officials who carried them, were earning much money.

But neither the hatchetmen with their guns nor the officials with the John Doe papers could find Wong Hing Chung, the president of the Bing Kungs, and the Hop Sings were so angry that had he been on his way to prison with the hand of an official upon his arm, or had he been standing before a magistrate with his lawyers by his side, he would have been killed at once, even though it meant the hanging of the man who should do it.

Wong Hing Chung knew that the man who would kill him would receive \$2,000 for himself if he escaped, and the same amount for his near relatives if he were hanged or sent to prison for

the remainder of his life; and that is a great deal of money. In the Middle Kingdom twenty men would die willingly if assured that their families would each receive \$100, for that is a great fortune there. And Wong Hing Chung knew that anyone who would give the Hop Sings information of his hiding-place would receive \$250, so remained securely hidden away, even from the members of his own *tong*.

Quan Quock Ming sat very straight on the edge of his stool, his elbows resting on a table and his hands holding "The Book of Changes," a very mysterious work that only great scholars understand. His pupils sat in a semicircle on the floor, the twenty of us shouting over and over again twenty different sentences from "The Great Learning," while he, paying no attention whatever, though we were growing hoarse, studied the pages of his book through the big horn-rimmed spectacles that rested on the end of his nose. Suddenly he closed the book, laid it on the table and surprised us by saying:

"That is sufficient for today"—we had been at our lessons only a little more than eight hours—"and none of you need return to your studies tonight, excepting Fung Ching."

That surprised me still more, for I was a diligent and favored pupil, and was as deserving of an evening's holiday as the others, especially as it was the first he had ever given us. Still I thought he must have some purpose that I did

not understand, for he had been my very best friend from the time I first saw him in the sampan that carried us out to the ship in Hongkong harbor.

When I returned in the evening I was admitted by Fong Fah, his wife, and as I started toward the lesson-room she stopped me, saying:

"Not that way. Go in there," and she pointed toward the inner compartment where Quan Quock Ming did his reading and writing, told fortunes and gave advice.

The room was quite dark, except for a dim light that came through a partly opened door at the back of the apartment, which evidently opened into another room that I had never seen. I hesitated a moment and then approached the door, not stealthily but noiselessly, for my Chinese shoes made no thumping sound, and when I looked in I saw Quan Quock Ming and Wong Hing Chung, the president of the Bing Kungs, smoking opium together on a bunk, and I heard Quan Quock Ming saying:

"It is well that you came to me, for you have always been my very good friend. None will ever think of looking for you in the home of the poor scholar who knows nothing of passing events, excepting such as are revealed to him when he tells a fortune."

"That is true, venerable and learned Quan," said Wong Hing Chung. "If you were not my very good friend you would have told the Hop

Sing men long ago that I was hiding here, you would have earned the reward, and I would now be before the King of Death. It is hard to put trust in any person when such rewards are offered. You and my wife are the only persons upon whom I could stake my life. I know there are men in my own *tong* wicked and treacherous enough to earn the reward upon my head, if they thought it could be done with safety to themselves."

"I will send your message to your wife tonight by a pupil of mine," said Quan Quock Ming, "and you can see her here."

I was greatly frightened, not knowing what would be done to me if they should find that I had overheard them, so I slipped away to the other side of the room, and then advanced noisily as though I had just entered. Quan Quock Ming met me at the door, and closing it behind him took me by the arm and led me back to the outer apartment.

"Take this letter to the opium room beneath the theater and give it to the woman you will find there," said he. "If you make a mistake I shall beat you when you come for your lessons; if you do as you are told I shall reward you well."

As I hurried away I heard Quan Quock Ming tell Fong Fah that a woman would soon come and to admit her at once. I had no difficulty in finding the room at the theater, but the door was locked, and I had to knock loudly several times before a man's voice asked:

"Who is there?"

"A boy with a letter," I answered.

The door was opened a very little and some person peered out, and then wider when the occupant of the room saw I was alone. I entered and found only a man in woman's attire. He extended his hand for the letter, but I put it behind me saying:

"This is for a woman."

"I am a woman—in the play," he replied.

"It is for the wife of—of a man."

"I know. I will give it to her," and holding me by the arm he took the letter from me rudely.

I went away slowly and reluctantly, fearing I had done wrong in not following exactly the instructions that had been given me; and the more I thought of the matter the more fearful I became that I would surely get the beating that Quan Quock Ming had promised me. So, upon reflection and after much hesitation, I decided to hurry back to him and explain the mistake, if one had been made, in order that it might be rectified, if it were not already too late.

As I ascended the stairs leading to Quan Quock Ming's apartments I saw the person to whom I had delivered the letter seeking admittance, and I hurried the faster. The door was opened by Fong Fah, and as the stranger entered and strode directly toward the inner room without speaking she appeared greatly agitated, stared after him and held her baby closer in her arms. I

followed as quickly as possible to warn Quan Quock Ming, but when I reached the door the stranger had already entered. I was about to cry out when I saw my instructor, without a nod of recognition or a word of greeting, point toward the inner apartment where Wong Hing Chung was hiding. The man in woman's garb walked quickly across the room, paused just long enough to take a big revolver from his sleeve, threw open the door and stepped inside.

There was a scream and then three quick shots. I stood paralyzed with fear while the stranger opened the door to the public hallway, threw the revolver out, left the door open, bolted the one leading into Quan Quock Ming's apartments, ran back to the living-room, seated himself beside Fong Fah and took her crying baby from her arms.

"Your stupidity was the cause of this," said Quan Quock Ming, and he glared at me so fiercely that I thought he would not wait until the morrow to give me a beating. "You gave the letter to the wrong person, but if you say nothing of this matter to anyone you will not be punished. If you open your mouth to speak of it you will surely be killed. As he is dead I may as well claim the reward, so that I may make sacrifices at the Tien How Temple, asking the gods not to punish you too severely for your error."

When the *fan quai* officials came, talking loudly and breathing hard, they found Wong Hing

Chung dead; they found the revolver that had killed him; they heard me repeating sentences from "The Great Learning," they saw Quan Quock Ming studying "The Book of Changes"; they saw two frightened women, one of them holding a crying baby and saying:

"Sh-h-h-h!"

But they did not find the person who killed Wong Hing Chung, the president of the Bing Kungs. He was a highbinder.

BOOK II

WAYS THAT ARE DARK

CHAPTER I

GAMBLING FOR HER FREEDOM

WHEN I called for my night lessons in the classics Quan Quock Ming was smacking his lips gluttonously over the last morsel of his evening meal. Fong Fah was standing at his elbow watching him furtively in order that his wants might be anticipated, and tossing her child incessantly on one arm so that no cry should disturb her honorable husband's serenity.

He merely glanced up and grunted, but she gave me a weary, wistful smile of welcome.

"Tea!" growled Quan Quock Ming.

Fong Fah hastily poured another cup for him, and he sipped it noisily. Then, moving swiftly but softly, she placed before him the basin of hot water and cloth. When he had laved and dried his greasy fingers he rose from the table, smacking his lips and grunting with satisfaction as he retired to the inner apartment to smoke and rest.

As Fong Fah cleared away the empty dishes, for he had not left so much as a scrap for her, I

saw she was crying, but without sound or expression.

I had often seen the waters of sorrow spring to her eyes and fall upon the baby as it slept in her arms, or upon the sewing as it lay in her lap; but Quan Quock Ming seemed never to observe her grief, for that was her own affair, nor to notice the child, for it was a girl and therefore a reproach, nor to watch the sewing so long as he received the usual amount of money from the factory across the street.

"Why do you shed tears? Is it because you are still hungry?" I asked, thinking of the stunted, half-starved girl she was when I first saw her on the ship at Hongkong.

"I have enough to eat," she replied.

"Is it then because you have not borne your honorable husband a son?"

"No; he can take a secondary wife who will bear him a son."

"Then, is it because you are tired?"

"No; it is not that. Though a wife never rests or sleeps and is always dressed, ready to attend her husband or her children at any moment of the day or night, that is but her duty, and she would be very wicked and ungrateful to complain. Besides I am fortunate in having no husband's mother to reprove or to beat me."

"Then why are you so often crying?"

"From hunger of the heart—a hunger for news of my mother and of my younger brothers and

sisters, who were starving when I was sold for half a mat of rice. I would be content and cry no more, even though the sea is always between us, if I only knew——”

Quan Quock M'ing, like Kung-foo-tsze, could have said of himself, quite truthfully:

“I am an insatiable student, an unwearied teacher.”

He could write an ode in the ancient style, which is unintelligible without explanation, or he could compose a thesis in the flowery style, such as is used by scholars in preparing essays. Often he would say to his pupils:

“If the Son of Heaven should destroy all the books in the Middle Kingdom, as Shih Huang-ti did twenty-one centuries ago, I could rewrite the Five Classics and the Four Books from memory without omitting a single character. But you, who are to be merely laborers or merchants, require only a knowledge of the business style for legal papers and commercial correspondence, and of the colloquial style for letters to your personal friends and relatives.”

While he was teaching them to observe, to learn and to record everything concerning their families, their friends, their acquaintances and even their enemies, he was growing in repute as a sage and a prophet. He could tell the past or reveal the future with perfect ease and accuracy, and many persons called at his home daily to receive advice upon perplexing matters. To me, his only student

in the classics, these interruptions were always welcome, for my lessons were wearisome, and the discussion of intimate personal affairs, to which I was permitted to listen, was diverting. Often he would say to a visitor:

"The day is not propitious. Come at another time," and then to me: "I could have told that person all he wishes to know this very day, but I desire that you should learn all you can concerning him, in order to test your abilities. We shall see how near you get to the truth."

The progress I made under his guidance was marvelous, for by listening when he subsequently told the visitor of his past I found that I had made few and only trifling errors; and Quan Quock Ming would compliment me upon my diligence and accuracy.

I was reciting from the Analects of Kung-foo-tsze, repeating over and over again the sentence to fix it in my memory:

"Ah, 'tis hopeless. I have not yet met with the man who loves virtue as he loves beauty."

Quan Quock Ming was reading "The Doctrine of the Golden Medium," and paying no attention whatever to me. A young woman came to the door and paused an instant as though in doubt whether to enter or to retreat. When I halted in my recitation she advanced the three paces, gave the three salutations and stood before Quan Quock Ming with head respectfully bowed, waiting for him to speak.

He raised his eyes slowly from his book until he could see her over the horn-rimmed spectacles on the end of his nose; then he threw up his chin with a jerk and stared at her long and seriously through the glasses.

The girl stood with downcast eyes while his gaze traveled slowly from her shining black hair, newly dressed and held with ornaments of gold, jade and pearls, down to her white silk stockings and embroidered street shoes, then swiftly back to her face that was like an almond, first blanched and then tinted. Her eyebrows were shaven to delicate arches that nearly touched her long black lashes at the corners of her eyes, and her chin came to a point so fine that it seemed to pinch her carmine lips into a dimpled pout.

"What do you want?" asked Quan Quock Ming, but in a tone so mild and gentle that it sounded like the voice of another.

"Advice, sir scholar," she answered, without raising her eyes.

"Sit down."

She found a stool, removed her silk-padded coat, laid it across her knees, buried her folded hands in the tiger-fur lining and sat quite still. Her manner was of one who is accustomed to awaiting commands patiently and obeying them promptly.

Quan Quock Ming's eyes roved over her silken garments, richly embroidered, and rested for an instant upon her gold and jade bracelets and jeweled fingers. Then he took up his urn of question

sticks, shook them until they were well mixed and asked her to select one. As he took it from her he said:

"I know naught of you; naught of your honorable ancestry; and naught of your personal affairs; but this will reveal all to me."

He held it to the light, squinting at the mysterious characters upon it and muttering to himself. Then he turned to the girl, saying:

"You are Ah Gum, of the family of Chin, and you are owned by Loo Yee. He bought you for \$1,000 after Wong Yick, your first owner, had agreed that you might buy yourself for \$1,800. You owe so much money to other persons that you cannot see how you can ever buy your freedom. Is it not true?"

"It is true, sir scholar."

"You are called Suey Sum, because you seem always to be happy, but it is not true that you have a contented heart. The old woman who guards you—Woo Ho is her name—beats you often; and you know very well that you will be killed if you run away."

"That is true, sir scholar; and you can doubtless tell me that when I smile all day for the men I cry all night for my mother; that my father, who was very poor, died when I had lived but fourteen years, and his relatives sold me in order that my mother, who was his secondary wife, might live. It was quite proper that they should, and it is only right that I should be obedient and



"The old woman who guards you beats you often; and you know very well that you will be killed if you run away." 102

live as I am commanded by the elders of my family—and without complaint. I am used to it—the beatings and all—but I want my freedom so that I may return to the Middle Kingdom and my mother with money enough to support her in her old age.”

“In this country,” said Quan Quock Ming, “there are few women and many men. You are young and beautiful. Wait and work patiently, and in time some prosperous man will buy you for a wife.”

“Then my owner will get the price of my freedom, and my mother will get nothing.”

“But you will get a good husband.”

“I want no husband. Wives are only furniture and mothers—the slaves of their husbands and children.”

“Every woman should marry, for no man can die without a son.”

“That is true, sir scholar, and if I could first gain my freedom, so that my mother would get the wedding present, I could endure even a husband. It will take me two years at least to earn enough to buy my freedom, and I will hang myself rather than work that long. I have told my owner so many times. Tell me how I can get enough to buy myself quickly.”

“That is very difficult, but it may be done—provided you have been obedient to your master, respectful to the gods and have not otherwise violated the rules of propriety.”

"I have been obedient to my master and respectful to the gods, and I have observed the rules of propriety so far as I know them."

"There is but one way that you can earn money quickly—in the lottery."

"I have been trying to win in the lotteries for two years, sir scholar, but fortune is against me, and I have already lost what would have paid for my freedom if I had saved it."

"You have doubtless bought tickets every day?"

"I have played in the daytime and nighttime drawings of all the companies—and even in the second companies."

"What do you mean by second companies?"

"Surely you know what they are, sir scholar?"

"Certainly, but I wish to know if you understand them."

"When the *fan quai* officials are meddlesome the lottery drawings are held in the city across the bay. The agents here must deliver to the companies before three o'clock their reports of all tickets sold. At that hour the daytime drawing is held, and the result is sent by a messenger, who cannot get here before four o'clock. Between three and four the agents sell tickets on their own account, paying all losses and keeping all profits. These are called second companies."

"That is quite right. There must be a way to win the favor of the gods and the money of the lotteries. I shall have to make sacrifices at

the Tien How Temple before I can advise you. Come tomorrow at two o'clock."

"I will come, sir scholar."

Suey Sum put on her coat, bowed and departed, and Quan Quock Ming sat staring at the door long after she had gone. Then he sighed deeply, took off his spectacles, clasped his hands over his stomach, rested his chin upon his breast, closed his eyes and pondered. Suddenly he raised his head, rubbed his hands together, smiled broadly and said:

"It will be very easy."

CHAPTER II

THE UNEXPECTED TURN OF FORTUNE

QUAN QUOCK MING looked often at the clock and the door before Suey Sum came. He nodded her to the stool opposite him, and she sat with downcast eyes and folded hands waiting for him to speak, while he studied her narrowly and waited for her to raise her eyes. When she glanced up without raising her chin he smiled, and she twisted her shoulders nervously.

"Have you any advice for me today, sir scholar?" she asked.

"Will you follow it if I give it?"

"I will do whatever you tell me, sir scholar. I must have my freedom or I shall die."

"You are well known at the lottery agencies, are you not?"

"At every one. My ill fortune is so well known that they are eager for my patronage."

"Then go at once and buy one fifty-cent ticket at each of the ten agencies where you are best known, marking always the same characters. And play only in the Tie Loy Company."

"I have no money, sir scholar."

"Then pledge one of your bracelets with a money-lender. Be sure to say at each agency: 'I

have been compelled to pawn a bracelet in order to play, but I shall win enough to buy my freedom or lose all I have.' After three o'clock return to the same agencies and buy at each another fifty-cent ticket in the second companies. Come again at noon tomorrow and tell me what success you have had."

There was disappointment on Suey Sum's face when she came, and she said at once:

"Sir scholar, I lost."

"I knew you would," replied Quan Quock Ming, smiling and rubbing his hands.

"But I want you to tell me how to win."

"I must first teach you how to lose."

"I have done nothing else for years."

"Either do as I tell you without question, or walk your way," said Quan Quock Ming severely.

"I will do as you bid me, sir scholar, even if I must pawn my clothing, for I trust you."

"That is well. Go again today and do exactly as you did yesterday. Pledge your bracelets as you need money, complain much of your losses and shed a few tears if you can."

"I do not know which is the easier, sir scholar."

Each day Suey Sum returned to tell of her ill fortune, and each day Quan Quock Ming advised:

"Do again today as you did yesterday."

On the morning of the ninth day foreign devils came to Quan Quock Ming's house and placed upon the wall the instrument for wire talking, and

at three o'clock the prophet was saying to the slave girl:

"You are good and obedient. You have learned how to lose, and now I shall tell you how to win. The gods will instruct me through this machine of the foreign devils. Take this pen and ink and mark the characters as I instruct you."

Soon there came the ringing of a bell and Quan Quock Ming put the hand piece of the instrument to his ear.

"Be ready," he said to Suey Sum. "Earth—cloud—flood—moon—heat—autumn—winter—gold," he called, and then left the instrument. "Go at once to the ten agencies that you have been patronizing and at each mark those characters upon a fifty-cent ticket of the Tie Loy Company. For the other two mark any but 'dew' and 'gem,' for they are also winning characters."

"Then why should I not mark them, too?"

"Your winnings on ten characters would be more than the second companies could pay. All will grumble as it is, and some may even refuse, but we shall see about that. The instant the drawings come from across the bay collect the money and come to me."

Within an hour Suey Sum came running in.

"I won! I won!" she cried, and began throwing gold by the handful upon the table.

"Did I not tell you that you would?" said Quan Quock Ming sternly.

"Yes, but I can hardly believe it now, sir

scholar. Such great good fortune! Now I shall be able to buy my freedom and return to the Middle Kingdom. And my mother will be rich!"

Suey Sum laughed and clapped her hands with joy. Then she dropped upon a stool, flung her arms upon the table, buried her face in them and wept. Quan Quock Ming frowned, shook his head and clicked his tongue, as he gathered the coin into stacks.

"All have not paid, or you have been cheated," he said, as he finished counting it.

"It does not matter, sir scholar. There is still enough," sobbed Suey Sum.

"Who are the thieves that would rob an unfortunate girl?"

"Sang Wo and Tai Yick refused to pay, saying they had been tricked."

"I shall see that they pay. Return to your master now and let me negotiate with him for your freedom. I will be able to make a better bargain than you, and it must be done promptly, else he may hear of your good fortune and demand a higher price."

"Do not haggle with him, sir scholar. I am so eager to see my mother that I can hardly wait a day."

Suey Sum dried her eyes and went away slowly and weakly, like one who has been ill. As she passed through the outer room she stopped to look at Fong Fah sewing buttons on shirts and

jouncing her baby on her knee. Fong Fah glanced up and smiled in her friendly way.

"You are a wife and a mother," said Suey Sum, "and still you are a slave."

"You are a slave," replied Fong Fah, softly, "but still you are free."

"I would rather be a slave of the world than the wife of a man; but I should like to have a child like yours—if I were sure it would never be a slave."

"Or a wife," said Fong Fah.

Suey Sum touched the baby's cheek lightly with her finger-tips and went her way.

"I sent for you, Loo Yee, to ask you to fix a price upon the slave girl, Suey Sum," said Quan Quock Ming.

"Are you seeking an investment or a secondary wife?" asked Loo Yee.

"I am prepared to buy this girl. Be good enough to state your price."

"I will sell her for \$3,000."

"That is too much."

"The price at which she may buy herself has been fixed at \$1,800, and she owes the interest for nearly two years at three per cent a month. The price I have given you is merely principal and interest."

"I will pay \$2,200. That is principal and interest at one per cent."

"I cannot accept it. I would lose too much."

"She may die or run away, and then you would lose all."

"You are taking the same risk if you buy her."

"I am willing to take some risk, but not all."

"I will meet you halfway. I will accept \$2,500."

"I will pay it. Here is the preliminary present to bind the bargain," and Quan Quock Ming handed him a few small coins. "Draw your writing of sale and deliver the girl. The money will be ready."

As Loo Yee departed a kinsman of Quan Quock Ming's entered.

"I did everything, venerable uncle, as you directed," he said. "I attended the drawing, and the very instant it was completed I ran to the speaking-machine and repeated to you the numbers that had been drawn. Was it successful?"

"It was successful, but Sang Wo and Tai Yick refuse to pay, saying it was a trick. Take these tickets and collect the money. They will hardly dare refuse a hatchetman of the Suey Sing *tong*. Do whatever is necessary, and I guarantee everything."

"If they refuse they will carry their coffins on their backs."

"Sir scholar, you did not tell me that this girl had won nearly \$5,000 in the lottery," complained Loo Yee when he came to deliver Suey Sum.

"Loo Yee, you did not tell me that this girl has frequently threatened to hang herself and owes much money."

"Here is your writing and your slave."

"Here is your money."

Loo Yee went his way, shaking his head and grumbling over the bad bargain he had made.

"Loo Yee gave me account of your debts, and I have paid them all," said Quan Quock Ming to Suey Sum.

"Then, sir scholar, I am quite free?"

"Yes, you are quite free."

"And how much money have I left?"

"Nothing. It was necessary to use much for sacrifice to the gods, so that they would instruct me how to proceed, and there were other expenses."

"It is no matter. I can soon earn enough to take me back to the Middle Kingdom and keep my mother in comfort for the remainder of her life. But how can I ever pay you, sir scholar?"

"Very easily, Suey Sum. Give me a cup of tea."

Suey Sum poured the tea, spilled a little on the floor for good luck and handed it to Quan Quock Ming. He drank it quickly.

"Now you should be very happy, Suey Sum. Your freedom has been bought, and you have given the ceremonial cup. You are no longer a slave, but my secondary wife. Assist Fong Fah with the evening meal. I am hungry."

"Aih-h-yah!" cried Suey Sum, as she fell to the floor.

"Women are weak and foolish," said Quan Quock Ming.

CHAPTER III

THE WATER-SNAKE SHOWS ITS HEAD

QUAN QUOCK MING, promoter of happiness, and longevity, sat beneath the shelter of his faded sunshade at the street corner, his arms resting upon the table before him and his eyes wandering listlessly over the deserted cross-ways.

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!" he croaked perfunctorily, then muttered a malediction upon the heat that kept prospective patrons within doors.

A premonitory crash of gongs sounded in the restaurant opposite, and he waited expectantly for the beginning of the orchestral selection, blinking with each succeeding smash. The wooden drums rattled their prelude, and the fiddles whined a theme, repeating it insistently till the voice of a slave girl took it up, then dropping into a punctuating accompaniment.

"Ha! 'A Wife's Grief Because of Her Husband's Absence,'" muttered Quan Quock Ming, as he recognized the ancient ode of T'sin. "The fool should have provided something to occupy her time more profitably," and he wondered whether his three wives were working diligently at the shirts from the factory or idling over the

tea of the chrysanthemum bloom. He would discover later.

His eyes closed, opened and closed again. His chin buried itself slowly in the fat beneath it, and his horn-rimmed spectacles dropped upon the table before him. Perspiration oozed from his face like lard from the jowls of a roasting pig, and he breathed in half-choked gurgles. As the orchestra brought its whining, twanging and clattering to a close with a series of crashes, he started from his doze.

"Hai-i-ie!" he growled. "May ducks guzzle the livers of all musicians!"

He mopped his face with a green silk handkerchief and refitted his red-buttoned cap to the top of his head, as he would the lid to a ginger jar. He set his spectacles astride the end of his nose, where they would not obstruct his vision, and folded his hands over his paunch as though to hold himself upon his stool.

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!"

The screen door of the Great Harmony and Good Will pork shop flew open, and old Wong Yee Shi, the marriage broker, rushed out to cry her wrongs to the world.

"Aih-yah!" she screamed. "Five cents for six sausages no larger than punk-sticks!" A quick glance up and down the street convinced her that her design of attracting a crowd and compelling a compromise was hopeless. "May an evil spirit in the form of a razor cut the tallow from the

ribs of all butchers for candles to light their way to hell!" she shrieked, as she straightened the pad over the bald spot at her forehead, then turned away muttering and grumbling.

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!" and Quan Quock Ming shook his urn of question-sticks briskly.

Wong Yee Shi stopped at his table and faced him with an accusing frown. "Hai-ie! How can you promise good fortune to everyone, when there is nothing within the Four Seas but misfortune?" she demanded. "Tell me that?"

"All fortune is good fortune, even though evil be predicted," replied Quan Quock Ming. "Warned of its approach, one may induce the gods to avert it through prayers and sacrifices," and he shook the sticks invitingly.

"You know very well that everyone meets it," insisted Wong Yee Shi.

"No—only the foolish. The wise know nothing of it."

"Aih-yah! I am the most unfortunate of women!"

"Therefore the most foolish." The promoter of happiness and longevity nodded sapiently.

"Hai-ie! Is it my folly that makes the young people immoral and unfilial?" she demanded.

"How have they become so? And how does it concern you, if they have?" he asked.

"Why, the girls have become so immodest that they actually converse with the young men, who

arrange their own marriages—just as the wicked foreign devils do—leaving honest marriage brokers to starve and indulgent parents to grieve.”

“The wise always profit by the folly of others, Wong Yee Shi.”

“That is easy to say, but difficult to accomplish.” She nodded a challenge.

“Easy for a sage; difficult for a fool,” he answered.

“Then tell me how I can turn my misfortunes to account.”

“I shall first show you how I can use them to my profit, Wong Yee Shi. Pay me a fee for advice.”

“Hai-ie! Why should I be so foolish as to do that?”

“In order that you may gain wisdom.”

Wong Yee Shi took a coin from her purse and flung it upon the table. “It is throwing silver into the street,” she grumbled.

“And giving you advice is wasting wisdom on the winds, so we are quits, Wong Yee Shi. But listen. In going from house to house in search of husbands for girls and wives for men you gather much gossip. All that you hear is of value to some one. Sort it and sell it.”

“Aih-yah!” cackled Wong Yee Shi. “I have heard some that may be of value to you, sir scholar.”

“That is possible.” He smiled patronizingly. “Tell me, and I shall pay its worth.”

"Dr. Young Hop often visits your home in your absence. I have heard it from many, and all smile in speaking of it."

"Hai-ie!" Quan Quock Ming sprang from his stool so suddenly that he nearly upset his table and Wong Yee Shi at the same time. "What a great misfortune!"

"How much is it worth to you, wise philosopher?" and she grinned through her gums.

"This piece of silver!" and he flung the coin at her.

"Such a great misfortune should be worth much more," she chuckled.

"We shall see," growled Quan Quock Ming.

"When you have turned it to account?"

"Go away!"

The promoter of happiness and longevity snatched the sunshade from its socket and closed it with a snap. He kicked the legs from under the table and folded it with a bang. He hung his stool from the crook of his left elbow, tucked the urn of question-sticks under his right arm, and gathering up the remainder of his paraphernalia hurried up the hill, puffing and muttering. He climbed the three flights of stairs and kicked on the door of his home. In three slaps of a pair of slippers it opened, and he tottered in. He threw the implements of his profession into a corner, dropped on a stool at the round table and labored for breath. One of his wives brought him a fan, another a cup of tea, the third—yes,

he took a third wife—his water-pipe, and then all resumed their sewing. As he fanned himself and sipped his tea he glared at first one and then another, but they only hung their heads lower and worked faster.

"Hai-ie!" he growled. "Prepare the evening meal!"

They dropped their work and hurried to the kitchen. He shook his head and clicked his tongue as he filled his water-pipe.

"Aih-yah! To expose themselves to gossip and their honorable husband to ridicule!" he muttered between puffs. "Ts! ts! ts! The filthy swine!"

The Analects of Confucius lay open before him and his eyes fell upon the first page.

"Men of superior minds busy themselves first in getting at the root of things," he read, "and when they have succeeded in this, the right course is open to them."

Upon reflection he nodded his approval. "Yes; that is true," he mused. "The man is at the root of this matter, and I shall get at him first. The water-snake who has invaded my home shall learn that I am no turtle to hide my head under a lily-leaf. Which one is guilty is a question of no importance, for I can beat the three of them and thus make sure that the right one is punished."

CHAPTER IV

CONTENDING WITH THE EVIL SPIRITS

AT the very moment that Quan Quock Ming sat glaring at his three wives, the three wives of Lee Sam Yick, two floors below, stood staring at their honorable husband, who lay upon the flat of his back.

"No one ever does that, unless he is dead or very ill," whispered the first wife.

Lee Sam Yick groaned and rolled his eyes.

"No one ever does that when he is dead," declared the second wife.

"That is true," said the others, and all drew closer to his couch to see what else he was doing.

Lee Sam Yick took a short breath and held it so long that they wondered how he managed to make it last; and when he did the same thing again, they marveled that he had enough left for a groan.

"Our honorable husband must be ill," the third wife whispered.

They had never been permitted to forget that a good wife should have no mind of her own, either for good or evil, and that nothing should be done without consulting their honorable husband, so the first wife, who had borne him a son

and was therefore free to speak without first begging his permission, asked:

"What is the matter, honorable husband?"

Lee Sam Yick took another breath and expended a part of it on another groan, but none of it on speech.

"Are you ill?" she asked, but he made no answer. "Shall I call a doctor?" Still he did not reply. "Our honorable husband has no breath to waste on words," she said, "so I shall speak to Lee Lim of the matter. Lee Lim! Hai-ie! Lee Lim!"

He came at once, watched his father's queer breathing and listened to his deep groaning. "Yes; my honorable father is ill. Send for a doctor."

"Chin Foo's boy! Hai-ie! Chin Foo's boy!" screamed the first wife at the door. "My honorable husband is thinking of dying! Fetch Young Hop, the doctor!"

"Lee Sam Yick is dying, and I am going for a doctor to help him!" shouted the boy, as he ran down the stairs three steps at a time and then up the street, pausing only long enough to tell all whom he met, for his news was much more important than his mission.

The neighbors hurried to Lee Sam Yick's house to look into the matter and crowded about the doorway. When they saw him rolling his eyes and heard him groaning, they asked:

"Is it true that you are dying, Lee Sam Yick?" but he made no reply. "He surely intends to

die," they said to one another. "Ts! ts! ts!" and shook their heads.

"Aih-yah!" cried half a dozen at once, as Dr. Young Hop came up the stair. "Lee Sam Yick surely intends to die!" and the children began to scream. *"Conical" death seen*

"Hai-ie! Are all of you physicians then, that you know so much about the matter?" demanded the doctor. *ignorance*

"No; but we have said it several times, and he does not deny it," they declared, as they made way for him, then followed him in.

Wishing to be helpful and to learn more of Lee Sam Yick's illness, all that could hastened to remove his clothing, then stood back and watched the doctor poke and pinch him, while he groaned louder and rolled his eyes wider.

"Ts! ts! ts! He is in a very bad way," they said. "It will be a big funeral, for he is wealthy."

Dr. Young Hop straightened himself, tucked his hands in his sleeves and regarded his patient gravely through his gold-rimmed spectacles while all waited breathlessly for his decision.

"Yes; Lee Sam Yick is ill," he said; "and something must be done about it."

"I have some medicine that I got from a foreign devil's drug store for my honorable husband's knee," said one.

"And I have some syrup that I keep for my baby's cough," suggested another.

"I made some turnip soup for my cold this very morning," said a third.

"Lee Sam Yick is no baby, and he has no cold," declared the doctor. "Nor is the trouble in his knee." He looked from one to another gravely. "He is possessed of evil spirits."

"Aih-yah!" gasped the women and drew back toward the door.

"Now I shall proceed to drive them out," said Young Hop.

All of the women suddenly remembered that they had much to do at home and hurried their children away.

"Is it true that my honorable husband intends to die?" asked the first wife.

"No; I shall not permit it," the physician assured her.

Seeing it was five o'clock, Dr. Young Hop forced five large pills down Lee Sam Yick's throat, painted his body in five places with brown medicine and put five blisters upon him.

"In five minutes the evil spirits will begin to leave him," he said, "and he will feel much better. In five days he will be quite well. I will come again tomorrow."

"That is good," said Lee Lim. He counted the minutes up to five. "That is bad," he muttered, as his father's groans grew louder, and he sent Chin Foo's boy for a foreign doctor.

"Lee Sam Yick is dying again, and I am going for a foreign doctor!" shouted the boy as he ran.

"If the evil spirits leave Lee Sam Yick, they will surely attack some other person," said the neighbors, as they closed their doors and windows and gave the children *li chee* nuts to keep them quiet.

"Who put on this paint and these blisters?" asked the white physician, after he had examined Lee Sam Yick.

"China doctor," replied Lee Lim. "He say evil spirits. Can drive 'em out. No die."

"He's a fool," declared the doctor. "No evil spirits. Bad lungs, bad heart, bad liver—bad all over. Sure die," and he pulled off the blisters, wrote a prescription and went away.

"I shall have to see a fortune-teller to learn the truth," thought Lee Lim.

"Chinese medicine is good, and foreign medicine is good," said the first wife, "and both together will surely cure my honorable husband."

She put the blisters back and gave the powders that the physician had prescribed, though she had much difficulty in getting Lee Sam Yick to swallow the papers. She got a bowl of turnip soup from the woman upstairs and gave him as much of that as she could compel him to take between groans. Then she borrowed the liniment from the woman next door and the cough syrup from the one at the end of the hall, and gave him a spoonful of each, for she could not remember which was to be taken and which rubbed in.

"When one is ill, one cannot have too much

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medicine," she said, and hurried to the foreign devil's drug store to buy a bottle of the kind that costs a dollar, and gave him that, too. Still Lee Sam Yick groaned and rolled his eyes.

"There is but one way to account for it," declared Dr. Young Hop the next day. "They must be very obstinate and malignant spirits. But I shall yet succeed in driving them out."

He gave more pills, applied more paint and blisters, burned joss paper and lighted punks. "Now you must leave him alone for five days without food or drink," he ordered. "The window must be left open, so that the spirits may go out when they become hungry and thirsty. The door must be kept locked, or they will surely remain in the house."

"How is the sick man?" inquired the white physician.

"Jess now he go out," replied Lee Lim.

CHAPTER V

PROPHET AND PRIEST COMBINE

THE promoter of happiness and longevity was smacking his lips over the evening meal, and his three wives were attending him. The moment he laid aside his chop-sticks one poured his tea. When he had finished his third cup another placed a bowl of hot water before him. When his wet fingers had passed over his mouth for the third time another gave him a towel.

"Now I shall take my rest," he said, as he dried his hands.

He rose from the table, kicked off his slippers, stretched himself upon his couch and closed his eyes.

"Silence irritates me, loud sounds disturb me, but the murmur of voices soothes me," he had told them once, and the admonition had been but once forgotten.

As the women settled themselves at the table to finish what he had left, they glanced at him furtively and saw a frown gathering.

"We have earned 75 cents today," murmured one quickly, and the frown began to relax.

"Tomorrow we should be able to earn nearly 80 cents," said another. The frown disappeared.

"The wife of Lim Toy has borne her husband a son," observed the third.

"There will be a great feast," reflected Quan Quock Ming, "and I shall advise Lim Toy to have it at the Lotus Flower restaurant. I should get a good commission."

"Lee Sam Yick is very ill," said the first wife.

"The foreign doctor says he will surely die," remarked the third, "but the Chinese doctor says that he will not."

"What doctor was called?" asked one.

The third wife glanced sharply at Quan Quock Ming, and saw his eyelids quivering.

"I don't know," she answered quickly. Quan Quock Ming frowned again. "But I think—someone said——"

The bell rang, and she hastened to open the door.

"Is the promoter of happiness and longevity at home?" asked Lee Lim.

She answered him by opening the door wider.

"Hai-i-ie!" growled Quan Quock Ming, as he sat up on the couch. "Is one not permitted to rest in his own home? One may as well be a stray dog in the streets!"

As he shoved his feet into his slippers he calculated the extra charge to be made for the disturbance of his tranquillity. Lee Lim advanced the three polite paces and made the three salutations, as he would upon entering the presence of a minor official.

"How is your health, sir scholar?" he asked courteously.

"Good!" grunted Quan Quock Ming.

"You are very fortunate," murmured Lee Lim.

"Did you disturb me to tell my fortune or to have yours told?" demanded the promoter of happiness and longevity, who had no patience with the rule of propriety that forbids one speaking of his business too precipitately.

"I came to have mine told, sir scholar."

"That is soon done." He took up his urn of question-sticks, shook them and held them before Lee Lim. "Choose one," he ordered.

Quan Quock Ming held it to the light and studied it intently, knitting his brows, shaking his head and mumbling over the characters inked upon it.

"Ah! I see!" he exclaimed, as light broke over his face. "You are anxious about something, and you wish to know whether it will end happily?"

"That is true, sir scholar," admitted Lee Lim.

Quan Quock Ming tapped the question-stick impressively with the long nail of his little finger. "This tells me that your honorable father is ill," he said, "and you wish to know whether he will live or die."

"It is marvelous, sir scholar, that you should know my thoughts."

"A foreign doctor has said he will die; a Chinese doctor that he will live. Is it not so, Lee Lim?"

"It is exactly as you say, sir scholar."

"And they differed as greatly concerning the cause of his illness, did they not?"

"Yes. The Chinese doctor says it is the work of evil spirits; the foreign devil that it is not."

"And you came to me to be told the truth, Lee Lim?"

"Yes, sir scholar."

"You have acted wisely. The truth, like your honorable father, lies between two liars, Lee Lim. Your honorable father's illness is the work of evil spirits—and he will die."

"Aih-yah!"

"What Chinese doctor did you have, Lee Lim?"

"Young Hop."

"Ah!" Quan Quock Ming glanced sharply at his wives and saw two of them look up at Shim Ming, the youngest. "Ah!" he repeated and smiled knowingly. "You may as well send for the *bonze* to make the sacrifices and offer the prayers, Lee Lim. Be careful to get one who knows the ways of evil spirits."

"Would you recommend one, sir scholar? I do not know the priests."

"Well—as a favor to you, Lee Lim—I will say this much: You should employ Soo-hoo Hung. He is a very learned man."

"I shall follow your advice, sir scholar."

"If there should be anything in your honorable father's business affairs that will require the at-

tention of a lawyer, be very careful in your selection, or you may be unfortunate."

"I shall ask your advice in that case, sir scholar. Now I shall walk my way."

The moment Lee Lim had paid the fee and departed, Quan Quock Ming laid aside his spectacles, clapped on his cap, slipped into his furlined jacket and hurried to the house of Soo-hoo Hung. The priest had just finished his fourth pipe of opium and was still reclining upon the bunk.

"My door never creaks when you enter, sir scholar." The *bonze* smiled amiably up at Quan Quock Ming.

"And it never slams when I depart," replied the teller of fortunes, as he kicked off his slippers.

"Because you are indeed a promoter of happiness."

Quan Quock Ming stretched himself upon the bunk, took up the pipe and began cooking opium for himself. "Alas! I am a bearer of sad news tonight. A man is about to die."

"How unfortunate—for the man!" observed Soo-hoo Hung.

"Yes; he is very wealthy."

"Funerals have been few and fees small of late," said the *bonze*. "I must see to this."

"I have already attended to the matter, Soo-hoo Hung, and you will be employed."

"You shall receive the usual commission, sir scholar."

"I expected it, or I would have mentioned the name of another *bonze*."

"Who is the man?"

"Lee Sam Yick."

"Aih-yah! It will be a big funeral. What is his affliction, sir scholar?"

"Evil spirits," replied Quan Quock Ming. "What else can afflict a wealthy man?"

"Nothing—so long as doctors are eager to get large fees. It is disgusting! Ts! ts! ts! They would leave nothing for the priests."

"Hai-ie! Which is more important—pills for the living or prayers for the dead? Tell me that," demanded Quan Quock Ming.

"If I were the man, I should say the pills, sir scholar."

"If you were a dead man, you would say——"

"Nothing," laughed the priest.

"You have had too much opium, Soo-hoo Hung," said Quan Quock Ming reprovingly. "Give heed to what I am saying, and it will be to your profit."

"Likewise to yours, sir scholar. My ears are open."

"If you were the filial and therefore foolish son of a wealthy man, Soo-hoo Hung, you would pay much for pills for the living, as Lee Lim does, and you would pay much more for prayers for the dead, as he will."

"And Lee Sam Yick will be dead much longer than he will be alive," chuckled the priest.

"Now when the evil spirits have succeeded in killing him, they will still remain in his body, will they not?"

"Certainly, sir scholar."

"And prayers instead of pills will be required to get rid of them."

"That is true, sir scholar. Only a *bonze* can drive them out."

"And that involves much time, trouble and expense," continued Quan Quock Ming.

"Time and trouble are as nothing to me, sir scholar, so long as others bear the expense," declared Soo-hoo Hung. "Evil spirits are obstinate and exacting, and invariably refuse to depart till the money or the patience of the family is exhausted."

"Thus much good flows from evil, Soo-hoo Hung. But what do you do with the spirits when you drive them out?"

"Oh, let them go their way. That is the end of the matter."

"Why let it end there, when it may be pursued further with profit?" asked Quan Quock Ming.

"I follow profit with willing feet and eager hands, sir scholar," laughed Soo-hoo Hung. "Show me the way."

Quan Quock Ming remained silent long enough to cook, roll and smoke another portion of opium, then laid aside the pipe.

"What will the evil spirits do when they leave Lee Sam Yick?" he asked.

"Doubtless busy themselves in annoying some other person," replied Soo-hoo Hung.

"Whom would they be most likely to select?"

The priest pondered and shook his head. "I cannot say, sir scholar."

"Why, an enemy—one who has been opposing them—most probably the doctor. Yes; you must send them after the doctor."

"Hai-ie! I had never thought of that!" laughed Soo-hoo Hung.

"Think more of it, and you will think well of it."

"But where will be the profit, sir scholar?"

"Leave that to me."

"And how can it be done? Even a priest cannot send evil spirits after persons as he would ferrets after rats."

"We will find the way, Soo-hoo Hung."

"Hai-ie! But that will be a great joke!"

CHAPTER VI

OBSTINATE SPIRITS AND DETERMINED MEN

WHILE Lee Sam Yick lay struggling with the evil spirits that beset him, his wives went softly about their household duties, and his son offered prayers at the family altar and sacrifices at the Tien How Temple. Often they paused at Lee Sam Yick's door to listen and hurried away when he groaned. Once there came from his room a sound as though he had fallen, and listening they heard him call feebly.

"I must go to my honorable husband," cried the first wife.

"No—not yet," said Lee Lim. "It is only the fourth day."

Then they heard the sound of coin clinking, falling and rolling upon the floor.

"Aih-yah!" cried the first wife. "It is the death offering to the evil spirits. I must go to him!"

"No; only the gods can aid my honorable father now," said Lee Lim, as he led her away from the door.

He prostrated himself at the family altar and beseeched the souls of his ancestors to aid his father. The three wives knelt to the Mother of Heaven and prayed silently, the first that her

husband might be spared, the second that suitable provision might be made for her support by the family of Lee, and the third, that she might still find favor in the eyes of a younger man.

"You may unlock the door," said Dr. Young Hop on the morning of the fifth day.

"Aih-yah! Aih-yah!" cried the first wife, when she saw her honorable husband still lying upon his back—not in his bed, but upon the floor among the gold and silver offerings.

"Hai-ie!" exclaimed the doctor. "How unfortunate! He has foolishly permitted his spirit to accompany the evil ones," and he departed in disappointment and disgust, but not before he had gathered up the coins.

The three women stood at the windows of the house waving the garments of Lee Sam Yick and crying to their husband's spirit to return to them, while Lee Lim waited in silence for the *bonze* to come with punk-sticks and prayer paper.

"What was the cause of your honorable father's departure?" asked Soo-hoo Hung.

"Evil spirits," replied Lee Lim. "They attacked his heart, and liver and lungs."

"Hai-ie!" exclaimed the priest, and rolled his eyes to heaven, mumbled a pious invocation and bowed with clasped hands three times toward the north.

"Now there is nothing to be done but to provide a funeral suitable to his wealth and station," said Lee Lim.

"There is much more to be done, Lee Lim," and the *bonze* shook his head gravely.

"The elders of my clan will order the funeral meats, hire the carriages, employ the mourners and bear him to his tomb," replied Lee Lim.

"There is more yet to be done, Lee Lim. The evil spirits must first be driven out of your honorable father's body."

"But Dr. Young Hop said they had gone."

"He knows more of pills and plasters than of the ways of spirits. If they should be interred with your father's bones, his spirit would never know a moment's rest, and neither you nor your children, nor your children's children would ever know anything but misfortune. You may as well lay him in a low place with his head to the south and be done with it."

"Aih-yah!" cried Lee Lim. "What is to be done?"

"It is a very delicate and difficult matter, Lee Lim. I shall first be compelled to offer sacrifices at the Tien How Temple."

"Take this," and Lee Lim gave the priest several gold coins. "Neglect nothing that may be necessary."

For seven days Soo-hoo Hung burned incense and opium at the expense of Lee Lim, sharing the pipe and the money with Quan Quock Ming, who in return gave sage advice.

"My father's body is still unburied," Lee Lim then said to the priest, "and the wicked foreign

devils are threatening to put me in prison if I do not attend to the matter. I have already paid you \$250, and nothing has been accomplished. What am I to do?"

The *bonze* shook his head and sighed. "I fear there is but one way, Lee Lim," he said. "I had hoped to find another, but it cannot be done."

"Tell me the way, and I shall follow it."

"It is now certain that the evil spirits do not intend to leave your honorable father's body till another is provided for them."

"That should not be so very difficult," said Lee Lim eagerly. "A picker of rags, who has no kinsmen, died yesterday, and——"

"Hai-ie! Do you think the spirits that attacked your honorable father would be satisfied with the filthy carcass of a rag-picker?"

"Then what is to be done? Tell me."

"They might be induced to attack Dr. Young Hop," whispered the priest. "He is the enemy that has been opposing them. I have no doubt that if he were to die they would be very glad to make him uncomfortable."

"But he is young and healthy, and I cannot keep my father's body unburied till he dies."

"It is possible, Lee Lim, that some good spirits might be persuaded to assist. I am quite certain it could be arranged if as much as \$500 were paid—for sacrifices. It is the only way."

"I will provide the means, for I am a filial son," said Lee Lim.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEATH SONG

THE three wives of Quan Quock Ming sat cross-legged upon the bare floor around a small lamp, sewing buttons on shirts. Quan Quock Ming sat at his round table impatiently turning the leaves of a fat dirty book—"The Geomancer's Lantern and Staff"—in search of the table of lucky days upon which one may punish an enemy.

"Ha! The 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 21st or 27th," he read. "This is the 5th day of the month. That is fortunate—provided Soo-hoo Hung is successful."

A violent ringing at the door interrupted the sewing and the soliloquy, and when it was opened the priest rushed in.

"Hai-ie! Did any one ever hear of such wickedness!" He clicked his tongue and shook his head in disgust. Quan Quock Ming eyed him over his spectacles and waited for the explanation. "What is worse than an unfilial son?" demanded Soo-hoo Hung. "Ts! ts! ts!" The fortune-teller merely blinked his eyes without taking them from the face of the *bonze*. "I told Lim that it would require \$500 at the very least to secure the

peaceful repose of his father's bones, but he refused to pay more than \$400."

"Hài-i-ie!" growled Quan Quock Ming. "We are doubly unfortunate. Ts! ts! ts!"

"Why? What has happened, sir scholar? Couldn't you find a fighting man to attend to the matter?"

"One accepted the employment at \$300, but now demands \$400."

"Aih-yah! That will leave nothing for us. Give the employment to another."

"Shall I say to him that you oppose it?" asked Quan Quock Ming.

"Hai-ie! Do you want to have me killed? Ts! ts! ts! It's very bad, but let him have it."

"I am certain, Soo-hoo Hung, that each of us has done the best that he could. Is it not so?"

"Yes—certainly—but—"

"Then give me the money, and I will attend to the matter."

"It must be done at once, sir scholar," said the priest. "The foreign devils have threatened to take Lee Lim to prison unless he buries his father's body at once."

Quan Quock Ming blinked his eyes and pondered. If Lee Lim were taken to prison he would require a lawyer. But the offense would be trifling, the fee small and the commission from the attorney only a third of it.

"Lee Lim may bury his father tomorrow," he said.

The priest, cursing unfilial sons and extortionate fighting men, counted out the money with lingering reluctance and departed. Quan Quock Ming counted it again and put it away in his camphor-wood chest.

"To be prosperous one must not only keep all that comes to him, but must contrive to get more," he mused, as he took up his water-pipe and resumed his seat at the table. "Too much light impedes thought." He extinguished the lamp and puffed and pondered in semi-darkness. "Ha! It is very simple. Call Chin Foo's boy," he ordered.

The first wife went to the top of the stairs and screamed down: "Chin Foo's boy! Hai-ie! Chin Foo's boy!"

"Go to the Great Profit to the Four Families tobacco shop," Quan Quock Ming directed the boy, "and tell Quan Ben to come here at once."

"I'm going to find Quan Ben!" shouted the boy, as he ran down the stairs.

While awaiting the coming of his kinsman Quan Quock Ming watched his wives working with monotonous deftness and rapidity. The light of their lamp fell squarely upon the face of Shim Ming, and he studied her leisurely. He smiled as he reflected upon the wisdom of his ancient ancestors that prompted them to repeat the ideographic character for "women" to make "wrangle," and the addition of another "woman" to mean "intrigue."

Shim Ming, vaguely conscious of his steady

gaze, shifted and glanced toward him furtively, but saw only the glow of his pipe. At the sound of footsteps without she dropped her work and hurried to open the door.

"Come in, younger nephew," said Quan Quock Ming, as his clansman hesitated at the threshold. "Sit down, younger nephew."

"It is dark, venerable uncle," said Quan Ben.

"Darkness has indeed descended upon the clan of Quan," sighed Quan Quock Ming, "and you are to be the bearer of light, younger nephew."

"What shadow has fallen, venerable uncle?"

"The heaviest—the blackest—younger nephew, and all of the family of Quan must hang their heads in shame till it is lifted."

"Hai-i-ie! That is very bad. But why am I selected to do this, venerable uncle?"

"Because it must be done," replied Quan Quock Ming.

"Then why does not the one who has lost his face boldly recover it?"

"By such a course he would advertise our disgrace more broadly, younger nephew. It must be done secretly by another."

"Then why does he not pay a fighting man to do it, venerable uncle? They ask no questions if the reward be ample."

"They would surmise—and whisper—and laugh at a clan so weak that it is compelled to buy its face. You must do it, younger nephew."

"I am no fighting man, venerable uncle, but it is

my duty to obey the elders of my family. It shall be as you say. Tell me the name."

"His name is—" Quan Quock Ming turned his eyes upon Shim Ming—"Young Hop." She started and dropped her sewing. "What is the matter, Shim Ming?" he asked.

"I—pricked my finger, honorable husband."

"Fetch us fresh tea."

As she placed it upon the table her hands shook so that she spilled it.

"Hai-i-ie! What is the matter with you?" demanded Quan Quock Ming.

"I burned myself, honorable husband."

"You appear to be ill, Shim Ming."

"No; I do not feel ill, honorable husband."

"If you should fall ill you would be unable to do your sewing, and that would be very bad. Shall I not call a doctor for you?"

"No—no, honorable husband—don't. I am quite well."

Quan Quock Ming shook his head gravely. "No; you surely need a doctor, Shim Ming," he said, and rose from the table, went to the door and called:

"Chin Foo's boy!"

"Haie!" responded the boy, and hurried up the stairs.

"Go fetch a doctor quickly—the doctor that killed Lee Sam Yick."

"I am going for the doctor that killed Lee Sam

Yick!" shouted the boy as he ran, and all who heard him laughed.

Quan Quock Ming opened his camphor-wood chest and took out a large revolver. As he handed it to his kinsman he smiled and said:

"The pills in this are not so large as some physicians prescribe but they are even more effective."

Quan Ben hid it under his blouse. "Now I shall walk my way, venerable uncle."

"Walk slowly, younger nephew," replied Quan Quock Ming. "The hallway at the second floor is very dark—when the lamp is extinguished. Be careful."

"I will be both careful and sure, venerable uncle."

"Remember—the second floor! I want no foreign devil officials kicking upon my door with their big boots."

"It shall be as you say, venerable uncle."

"Light my lamp, Shim Ming," ordered Quan Quock Ming. "Ah! That is better. You should not work when you are not feeling well. Rest—and while you are doing so, sing to me."

Shim Ming took up the dulcimer hammers and struck the strings of the *yung kum* lightly to see that it was in tune.

"I think I would like to hear one of the odes of T'sin." Quan Quock Ming smiled up at her. "Yes—by all means—one of the odes of T'sin."

Sing 'The Lady Lamenting the Death of her Lover.' "

While Shim Ming, with her eyes fixed upon the instrument, played and sang, Quan Quock Ming, his hands folded over his abdomen, smiled up at her, rocked himself and nodded the time. And these were the words she sang:

"My lover like the pine tree grew,
And lordly was the mien he bore.
Ah, me!
But I shall see him nevermore.

"My lover like the pine tree stood,
And bowed toward my humble door.
Ah, me!
But I shall see him nevermore.

"My lover like the pine tree sighed;
Each breeze to me a message bore.
Ah, me!
But I shall hear them nevermore.

"My lover like the pine tree fell;
But still his shadow's on my floor——"

The sound of a shot roared up from the lower floors and with it the death cry of a man:

"Ah-ma!"

Shim Ming faltered for only an instant before she half cried, half echoed:

"Ah, me!
And I shall see it evermore!"

As she finished the hammers dropped from her hands and clattered on the floor. Quan Quock Ming smiled and nodded.

"Very good, Shim Ming—very good! You sang that with much feeling. I think you are

cured, Shim Ming. You may return to your work."

With bowed head Shim Ming took her place among the other wives and took up her sewing. Quan Quock Ming resumed his reading where it had been interrupted, pausing long enough to say:

"I think I will have fried noodles for breakfast, Shim Ming."

"Hai-ie! Sir scholar!" shouted Chin Foo's boy in the hall. "Dr. Young Hop is dead at Lee Sam Yick's door!"

"Aih-yah! How unfortunate!" exclaimed the promoter of happiness and longevity. "Now I must lose my rest to seek a priest for Young Hop's widow and a lawyer for Lee Sam Yick's son. Ts! ts! ts!"

BOOK III

EAST AGAINST WEST

CHAPTER I

THE FEEL OF STEEL BRACELETS

"PROMOTER of Happiness and Longevity."

I read the carved and gilded characters above Quan Quock Ming's door while awaiting a response to my ring. From within came the odor of opium burned in the pipe, the shuffle of slippered feet, and then the high-pitched voice of a woman—one of the three wives of the fortune teller—demanding:

"Who's there?"

"Little Pete," I answered, thoughtlessly giving the name by which I am known only to the foreign devils.

"Who?"

"Fung Ching," and then the door was opened to me.

The promoter of happiness and longevity sat on the edge of his big cushioned chair—one such as lazy foreign devils use—his arms resting on the oilcloth-covered table and his horn-rimmed spectacles on the end of his nose. At his right

hand were his bamboo pens and India ink, his abacus and his water pipe, while at his left was a small lamp, to which he held a book so close that one could not be certain whether it was the lamp or the leaves that smoked.

As I entered he marked the point of interruption with his finger, raised his eyes and frowned at me over his spectacles during the time required to advance the three polite paces and make the three respectful salutations, and then he resumed his reading.

I did not know whether he was angry with me or perplexed by the text, so I seated myself on a teakwood stool opposite him, and took much time, first in finding a cigar and then in lighting it. He continued to read from "The Book of Changes" very slowly and half aloud, the guiding finger of his right hand pausing at each character until he had uttered it and then passing to the next. I puffed at my cigar and watched his head nodding rhythmically, his chin rising quickly with each line completed and descending slowly again until I could see only the red button of his cap over the top of the book.

When his finger had passed over the last character of the chapter he laid the book aside, folded his fat hands over his paunch, lay back in his chair and stared at me long and seriously through his spectacles. To do this it was necessary for him to raise his chin so high that the rolls of fat beneath it seemed to slide around

and form a cushion at the back of his neck.

I waited for him to speak, watching him meanwhile out of the corners of my eyes, and when I saw him reach for his water pipe I knew he was not angry, for he never smoked when he was perturbed. He had burned the first pinch of tobacco, had blown the ash from the bowl and was refilling the pipe before he spoke.

"Fung Ching, what is the cause of all this commotion among our countrymen over the foreign devils' *chock chee*?" he asked.

"Sir scholar," I answered, "why do you, a sage and a prophet, ask one so ignorant as I? Why do you not consult your question sticks?"

"The *gin quah* are but the means employed by me to interrogate the gods, who concern themselves little with the affairs of the foreign devils. Our gods are not their gods. Still if this *chock chee* business concerns our people greatly, I have no doubt that the gods will look into the matter. Therefore tell me of it."

"Very well, sir scholar. You remember—for often I have heard you complain of it—that the foreign devils made a law requiring all of our people in this country to get *chock chees*, stating the age and residence of each person, and upon each *chock chee* was placed a portrait of the one who received it, as well as the red seal of the official who gave it. After that none of our countrymen, unless he were a scholar or a

merchant, could come here, and none of those here could remain unless he had his chock chee."

"Yes, that is quite true; and it was a very wicked thing for the *fan quai* to do."

"Now a great many of our countrymen, who in truth are neither merchants nor scholars, wish to come here, and the *fan quai* officials have made it very difficult for them to prove that they really are merchants or scholars."

"What a great injustice! How wicked to deny that which can be proven!"

"And many who have been put to the expense of coming secretly by the northern or southern borders of the country are sent back to the Middle Kingdom, merely because they have no chock chees to prove they were here before the wicked law was passed."

"Then if a person once gets here and has a chock chee to show to the officials, he cannot be sent away?"

"That is true, sir scholar."

"What, then, does a chock chee cost?"

"They cannot be bought."

"Can it be true that the *fan quai* officials, who get them for nothing, will not sell them?"

"That is true, sir scholar. If one were caught doing so—and the government is very vigilant—he would be sent to prison."

"How is it possible for officials to live without squeeze?"

"They are paid wages, sir scholar."

"What a foolish way to govern! Paying wages to officials who could pay themselves out of the squeeze!"

Quan Quock Ming arose heavily and with much puffing and blowing searched in his camphor-wood chest until he found his own chock chee. He spread it on the table before him, smoothed it with his hands and studied it intently, frowning and shaking his head. Then he asked:

"Who made this paper?"

"*Fan quai* paper makers," I answered.

"Who printed these characters upon it?"

"*Fan quai* printers."

"Who made this seal?"

"*Fan quai* seal makers."

"And a *fan quai* clerk did this writing, and a *fan quai* picture maker produced this portrait of me. Now, if one could get a concession from the government to make and sell chock chees, what price would they command?"

"Our countrymen would gladly pay \$100 each."

"What would such a concession cost, Fung Ching?"

"It cannot be bought at any price."

"What! Is it not possible to buy a concession?"

"Not such a concession as that, sir scholar."

Quan Quock Ming shook his head, clicked his tongue and growled:

"Hai-e-e!"

Then he leaned back in his chair and folded his hands over his stomach in order to think with greater ease and accuracy. The *fan quai* ignorantly believe that intelligence is all in one's head; my people that it is in one's stomach. If anyone would be sure as to which is right, let him look at Quan Quock Ming, whose head is scarcely larger than a rice bowl, while his stomach is the size of a vegetable peddler's basket, yet he is the wisest man I ever knew.

"It is all settled, Fung Ching," said Quan Quock Ming, after a few moments of deep thought. "We shall make and sell chock chees without a concession."

"How can that be done, sir scholar? Surely it is impossible!"

"Nothing is impossible, Fung Ching, unless it be the task of providing you with ordinary intelligence. Find a foreign devil to do the printing, another to do the writing, and another to make the seal. The portraits can be obtained from any maker of pictures when they are required."

"But, sir scholar, we shall be sent to prison if we are caught."

"Then we must not be caught. Pay no money to the foreign devils who do the work, but promise each a share in the profits, so that they will not afterward speak of the things they have done. Think of the matter, Fung Ching, and I

will consult the question sticks to learn what lies in the future for us."

I did think much of the matter during the succeeding days, saying to myself again and again:

"The expense will be trifling and the profit great; but the risk will be considerable and the penalty may be severe."

I weighed the certainty of profits that meant luxury and ease against the chance of prison with mean fare and hard labor, and they seemed to balance; and as I was in no urgent need of money I determined at last to have nothing whatever to do with the matter. When I visited Quan Quock Ming to tell him of my decision he greeted me with unusual warmth and cordiality.

"I have interrogated the gods, Fung Ching," said he, "and it is certain that we shall have their aid in this chock chee business. If you doubt it, let me tell your fortune," and without waiting for a word from me he shook the question sticks about in their urn until they were well mixed and ordered me to select one.

He took it from my hand, held it to the light and scrutinized it carefully, mumbling and frowning over the mysterious characters upon it, and then smiled broadly.

"Ah! Here it is, Fung Ching!" he exclaimed. "The good spirits will aid you in any venture you may make that will be of benefit to your countrymen, and all will go well with you—

provided you are cautious and vigilant. Wealth, happiness and great age are assured you. Now, you see, it is just as I said."

I paid him his usual fee of twenty-five cents, for he had often explained that the gods would be angry if he took no money for sacrifices in exchange for their secrets, and then sat down to smoke and ponder upon the answer I should give him. He continued to urge me so strongly and with such positive assurances of success that I felt the glow of enthusiasm and made up my mind to it; but the moment he ceased speaking I thought of the prison, felt the chill of fear and changed my mind again. But soon I thought more and more of the profit and less and less of the prison, until the one appeared very large and near, and the other very small and distant; and then I consented.

I went from one printing place to another for days, and sought long and diligently before I found one who had such a large family and such a small business that he had to do his own work and wear old clothing. I employed him to print a few cards for me, and more for friends of mine, and then, as his charges were reasonable, and I paid a little out of my own pocket on each order, I was able to take him so much business from Chinatown that he was forced to employ an assistant.

The printer expressed much gratitude and friendship, and I did all I could to increase

both. One day I showed him my chock chee, asking if he could print some exactly like it. He said he could, and then I told him what great profits could be made if he would do the printing and get others to do the writing and make the seal. But he, too, was afraid of prison and politely refused. After that I took him very little business, and he was forced to discharge his assistant; and then I could see that he was thinking of the matter as I had. When he himself spoke of it again I knew that he had made up his mind to it, and we soon agreed that he should produce the chock chees, and I should dispose of them, the profits to be divided equally between us.

It was all done as we planned, and I had given Quan Quock Ming nearly \$2000 as his share of the proceeds, when I went to the printer one day to have the writing and seal placed on a chock chee I had sold. As I entered his shop I saw at once that all was not right, for he was not working, but was sitting beside a stranger, saying not a word and appearing ill and aged.

"Hello, Pete!" exclaimed the stranger. "You are the one that fixed up this scheme, are you?" and though he wore no star and had no brass buttons on his clothing he put bracelets of steel on my wrists and ordered me to accompany him.

I tried to get the chock chee out of my pocket to hide it or destroy it, but the official had

keen eyes and took it from me. I knew it could do me no good and might do me much harm to say anything, so when he asked me questions I simply answered:

"No sabe talk."

From the prison I sent for the principal men of the clan of Fung, told them all about the matter, asked them to get the advice and assistance of Quan Quock Ming and begged them to procure my freedom as quickly as possible. And from them I learned how it all had happened, for Quan Quock Ming explained it to them. It was this way: the gods were angry with me because I had not been more cautious in dealing with the foreign devils, and this was their manner of punishing me; nor could Quan Quock Ming help me without incurring their displeasure also. Nevertheless, my clansmen were very angry with him and said many harsh things of him.

"He is very rich," said one, "but he lives like a Hakka barber. He earns much money by telling fortunes."

"No; he has always been very poor," I explained. "There was a curse on his wife when he married her, and he himself has had bad luck ever since his father's grave was stolen and the bones disturbed. Every cent that Quan Quock Ming has since earned he has sacrificed at the Tien How Temple to placate the gods. He has told me so many times."

"We have heard much of the jingle of his money, but we have seen little of the smoke from his sacrifices," declared another. "Now he tells us that he has spent his share of the profits from this business in offerings for your benefit, but I do not believe him. I am sure he is a very rich man."

"That cannot be true," I answered heatedly. "If he were wealthy he would either boast of it or display it. What else would one do with his wealth? If one spends it he is no longer rich; if one hoards it he merely increases his burdens."

"He would not even give us advice, and that costs nothing," said another, "except to tell us to bribe the official, whom everyone knows very well cannot be bought. And when I asked him how one could bribe an honest official with money, or how one could bribe a dishonest official without money, he merely wagged his head, looked wise and answered:

"'Yes, that is the question.'"

When I learned that Quan Quock Ming would give me no assistance (I had counted on his share of the profits to aid me), and that the official could not be bribed (I had counted on that, too), the profits appeared very small and distant and the prison very large and near.

CHAPTER II

THE WHITE WOMAN AND YELLOW MEN

MERCHANTS of the family of Fung guaranteed to the extent of \$5000 that I would not run away, and I was released from prison. I went at once to see the lawyer my kinsmen had bought for me, to learn what the witnesses would have to say to prove I was innocent, so that they could be promptly procured and properly instructed.

"The officials will have to prove you are guilty," explained the lawyer.

"But suppose they do it?" said I.

"Then you will be sent to prison for several years."

"Can I not prove that I am innocent after they have proven me guilty?"

"That would be well if it could be done, but the printer and the men who aided him have told all they know of the matter. Still, that would not be sufficient if the official had not found the chock chee in your pocket."

"Then, suppose I get witnesses to prove the official himself placed it there?"

"That would not be credited, especially if it were told by Chinese witnesses."

"But I can get many honest merchants to swear they saw him do it."

"They would not be believed when he denied it."

"Not believe many honest men rather than one official! That is very wicked and unjust. It looks bad for me."

"Yes, it does, indeed."

The lawyer read to from me the *fan quai* newspapers, which had much to say concerning the forgers of chock chees. The official who arrested me had talked much to the writers of news, boasting that he had captured a big gang of desperate criminals, that all concerned would be sent to the prison across the bay, and that it was not possible for one to escape; that the printer, who had told everything at once and had a large family, would be given a short term; that the maker of the seal and the one who did the writing would be given longer terms; and that "Little Pete," the notorious highbinder and gambler, would be sent away for as long a term as the law would permit, because he was the ringleader. That was very certain, they said, because one of the forged chock chees had been found in his pocket.

All of this was very bad news for me, so I hurried to Quan Quock Ming to beg his advice and assistance.

"Go away, you fool!" he shouted as soon as I entered his door. "Why do you come here?"

Do you wish to see me in prison, too? Go away!"

"Why are you angry with me?" I asked. "What have I done but to follow your advice?"

"You have been very stupid and incautious and have offended the gods greatly, for you have thrown away an opportunity to do our countrymen much good and gain us great profit."

"You have shared in the profit, you are in no danger of prison, and now you refuse even to advise me."

"I can do nothing for you except with the permission of the gods. I shall have to make propitiatory offerings at the temple, and they will cost you \$100."

I gave him the money and went my way, but I called again the very next evening and asked at once:

"Now, sir scholar, what can be done about this chock chee business?"

"Will the official who arrested you accept a present?"

"No; and anyone who offers it will be taken to prison."

"Then he is a fool, and one can do what one wishes with a fool."

"What is to be done with him?"

"Make him take it."

"But how can such a thing be done?"

"Yes, that is the question. I shall have to

think," and he leaned back in his big chair with folded hands and rocked himself gently to and fro. "Has this wicked foreign devil any wives?" he asked, after long and deep reflection.

"Yes; I am told that he has one wife."

"Does he foolishly keep a servant instead of making his wife do the work of the household?"

"He did have a boy of the family of Wong, but he has gone away, and the official has asked Jue Wing, the interpreter, to get him another."

"Go at once, you fool, and make arrangements with Jue Wing to recommend one of the family of Fung—one who understands well the language of the *fan quai*, but do not let the foreign devil know that; and one who knows well how to do all that will be required of him, and be sure to let the foreign devil know that. Let him demand a very small wage. When he has been engaged bring him to me, and I will instruct him."

I lost no time in finding one of my clansmen who would be glad to help me out of my trouble; Jue Wing was very well satisfied with the few dollars he received for recommending the boy to the official; and the official considered himself fortunate in finding one who knew how to do all the work of the household for \$5 a week. When I took the boy to Quan Quock Ming, this is what the prophet said to him:

"Pretend you understand very little of the language of the foreign devils, but at the same time be quick to comprehend what is required of you. Be ever diligent and prompt in doing all that ought to be done without waiting to be directed. Above all, keep your eyes and your ears open to all that is done and said in the household, forgetting nothing that you see or hear. Each night when you finish your work come and tell me everything."

"They are very strange people," said my kinsman to Quan Quock Ming a few evenings later. "The foreign devil's wife is very young and pretty and has much fine apparel, and he shows her as much attention as one would a favorite singing girl, instead of the contempt that is due a wife who has not yet borne a son. Yesterday when they were at the evening meal she said to him:

" 'I need some money.'

" 'This is all I have,' said he, and he gave her a few coins.

" 'That is not enough. How can I live on so little?'

" 'But I give you money to pay the rent, the boy and the tradesmen, and you really need very little.'

" 'I need money for car fare, for clothing, for luncheons and for a thousand little things when I go shopping. Besides, I want to go to the theater, and I want to entertain my friends.'

"'But I earn very little, and I spend nothing on myself. I give all to you. I have not even bought a suit of clothes since we were married.'

"'Then why do you not earn more?'

"'I cannot do it honestly.'

"'Then do it some other way. I am tired of living like a beggar,' and then she began to cry and to talk very loud and fast about the things that other women do and have; but he put his arms around her, called her pretty names and kissed her many times, instead of giving her such a thrashing as would teach a wife her place.

"'They do not pay the tradesmen as they buy, but get bills at the end of each month, and the official examines them very closely. This month he did not give her the money with which to pay until other bills had been sent, and then she kept a part of the money back, spending it for pretty things that she did not need in the least.'

"'That is very good,' said Quan Quock Ming, rubbing his hands together and smiling. 'Now take a small package of choice tea as a present to your mistress, and if she seems pleased with it give her a bit of rare China or a piece of fine embroidery from time to time. Also tell the official that the tradesmen cheat him, and it would be much cheaper to pay cash for everything.'

Thus all that occurred in the home of the official was reported to Quan Quock Ming, and

in all that my kinsman and I said or did we but followed his instructions, though I could not see the wisdom in it. Once when I asked him why this or that should be done he roared at me:

"Because I say so," and I asked no more questions:

In time the official gave his wife money each day to pay the expenses of the household, but she would often spend a part of it for other things. Then my kinsman would pay for what was required. Sometimes she would try very hard to save enough to repay him without letting her husband know of the matter, but in the end she would spend what she had saved for some new finery, and soon she owed him more than \$50.

One day when she was crying because she had no money the boy said to her:

"Wha' fo' alle time cly? Takee fi' dolla; go hoss lace, bet, ketchee much money."

She took the coin he offered, went to the races and lost, and the very next day, when she was crying again, he gave her \$10, and that, too, was lost.

Then I went to the house to visit my kinsman, being careful to select an hour when the official would surely be out and his wife would certainly be in. At that time I spoke the language of the *fan quai* very well, very badly, or not at all, as the occasion seemed to require. When I

was introduced to the lady in the kitchen as a rich cousin of her servant, I said to her:

"You are very fortunate, for you are young and beautiful, and you will have a long life and much good fortune."

"Are you a fortune teller?" she asked, laughing as though she were greatly pleased.

"I can tell a little by the face, but much more by the hand."

"Then tell mine," and she held her hand out to me.

I examined it long and carefully, for it was very soft, and white, and warm, and then I said:

"You are very unhappy now, but that will soon pass over. You have been greatly disappointed in many small matters, but you will soon have a great deal of money and many fine friends."

"I hope your predictions are as true as the rest of it," she said, seeming well pleased, and when my kinsman spoke of the races, I said:

"I am so sure that you are very lucky that I wish you would bet \$20 for me. I will gladly give you half that you win."

She offered a few mild objections at first, but took the money. When I called again she told me she had lost and was very sorry, but I smiled and answered:

"That is nothing. I am certain you will yet be very lucky," and I gave her another \$20 to

bet for me. When that, too, was lost, I said to her:

"I am so positive that great good fortune attends you that I will lend you all you require, for I have much money. You can repay it when you have recovered your losses. You must make larger bets, doubling each time that you lose."

I carried \$300 in gold the next time I went to the official's house, and when his wife saw me spread it on the table she smiled and her eyes grew bright. Then she looked grave and said with much reluctance and hesitation:

"I cannot take so much. I do not know when I can repay it—if ever."

"I am quite sure you will, and it does not matter if you do not, for I am very rich."

She hesitated a little longer, then picked up the gold slowly and thoughtfully, and when it was all in her hands I offered her a paper to sign. It was a promise to pay to me, Fung Ching, \$300 in gold whenever I should demand it.

"I cannot sign this," she said, and laid the money down again.

"It is merely a receipt and amounts to nothing. I may not remember to put this in my books, and then forget where the money went, unless I have some sort of a paper."

She laid the writing on the table, and with the tip of her finger between her teeth stood looking at the money and the paper for a long time.

Then she turned and walked out of the room—but it was to get a pen.

My kinsman told me she lost it all in two days, but that she did not cry this time. Instead she sat very still all day, looking pale and ill, and saying nothing at all, even when he spoke to her.

I went to the house once more, and as soon as she saw me she hurried to me, shook my hand, called me her friend and asked me if I could lend her a little more money.

"I have come for what you already owe me," I said, politely but firmly.

At first she did not seem to understand me, but when I repeated my request she caught her breath quickly, grew very pale, straightened her shoulders and stared at me.

"Very well, I shall attend to the matter," she said, "as soon as possible."

My kinsman and I left the house at once, and neither of us ever went back.

Quan Quock Ming was sitting in his big chair smoking his long pipe when I called, and he merely nodded and grunted in response to my salutations.

"Sir scholar," said I, "tomorrow is the day upon which I am to go before the magistrate and his twelve assistants to answer concerning the chock chee matter. The official is still telling the *fan quai* newspapers that I shall surely be

sent to prison. I have been to see my lawyer, and he says he can tell me nothing."

"I have seen your lawyer, too," said Quan Quock Ming.

"Then tell me, sir scholar, what is to be done about the matter."

"Nothing," and he puffed his pipe as though it made no difference whatever to him if I were sent to prison. "All has been done that can be done."

"And nothing has been done except the spending of my money. I could have gone to prison just as well without that. Can you think of nothing that I can do to save myself?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Wait and see what the magistrate and his twelve assistants do," and he smiled and smoked.

I left him in anger without another word, for the thought suddenly came to me that he had tricked me so I would go to prison without telling of his part in the business.

The very next day I sat in court beside my lawyer, feeling so hopeless that I scarcely heard the questions asked of the twelve who were to say whether or not I was guilty, or the words of the printer, who related all that had been said and done by me. But I listened to the official when he told of the chock chee that had been found in my pocket.

"Where is that paper?" asked the government's lawyer.

The official hesitated an instant, his face growing red and then white, and finally, looking straight at the lawyer, answered:

"It disappeared from my desk last night."

As soon as the twelve men had said I was not guilty I went to Quan Quock Ming's home to boast that I had escaped prison without his assistance. He said nothing, but smiled significantly as he handed me the missing chock chee.

"Where did you get this?" I asked in amazement.

"A white lady gave it to me last night in exchange for her written promise to pay you \$300."

CHAPTER III

THE BAIT IN THE TRAP

"FUNG CHING!"

Someone called me, and I listened without pausing. There are sixteen ways of speaking the two words of my name, and each way has a different meaning. When spoken properly they mean "Fung, the Perfect." But the one who called uttered them in the seventeenth way, which had no meaning whatever, except that the speaker was an ignorant foreign devil. So I pretended not to hear.

"Pete!" he called again, a little nearer and a little louder, but still behind me.

My friendly name among the *fan quai* is "Little Pete," but the voice of that foreign devil had no friendly sound to my ears, so I continued on my way without changing my pace until I felt a grip on the arm that made me wince with pain and a jerk that turned me about so sharply that I nearly lost my cap.

I found myself face to face with the official who works secretly for the government—the one that promised to send me to prison for selling forged *chock chees*—the very same, yet very different. Then he had smiled on me with a little pity, much contempt, and great satisfaction.

Now he glared at me so fiercely that his thin pale face had the look of a cleaver that would cut and slash, and his deep dark eyes were like bullets that were ready to drive holes through me. As he held me by the arm, scowling and biting his lip beard, I knew I could not run away, and I knew it would be useless to call for help, so I tried to smile a little as I said, very politely:

"Hello! How bus'ness?"

In dealing with foreign devils I purposely speak their language imperfectly, for it is often convenient to misunderstand or to be misunderstood.

The official gripped my arm a little tighter, and I was wondering whether he intended to put irons on my wrists or a knife in my breast, when he said:

"You knew I would not take your dirty money, so you put up that job to get my wife to take it. You got away that time, but I will put you in prison yet. Do you understand?" and he gripped my arm tighter and shook it savagely; but when I found he had nothing worse than threats for me I was able to smile again.

"You likee put me in jail? All light; I go," I said.

"Yes; you will go all right. Don't forget that. And I will put you there."

He spoke so seriously and emphatically that I had no doubt at all that he was perfectly sincere, and as I hurried away I decided at once

I would be very careful to walk a long way around and step softly in all my dealings with foreign devils, so that he could neither see nor hear the fall of my feet. But when I saw him, within two days, talking into the ear of the Jew man who dealt secretly in opium that had not paid the government tax, I was certain he had found some of my footprints and was following them.

It is always well to know as much as possible of matters that may be important, so I thought it would be wise to make more tracks and see what would be done concerning them. I waited until the official had gone his way, and then a little longer, before I approached the dealer in opium.

"You ketchee opium today?" I asked.

"No have got," he replied, "but I get 'im one hour."

"You ketchee ten cans, allee one box?"

"Yes, I get 'im."

"All light; you ketch 'im; I come back."

Now that was a very peculiar way for the Jew man to do business. It was his custom to bargain long and sharply, saying much about the price, the difficulty of getting even so much as one can that had not paid the tax, and the great risk of detection and imprisonment, and telling it all in whispers. Yet this time he spoke loudly and quickly, saying nothing at all about the price or the trouble of getting ten cans, and seeming to be in no fear whatever.

Upon leaving I watched the dealer through the window of his store from the opposite side of the street and saw him go to the closet for wire talking; and soon the official came in a great hurry, and went away again even faster. And in the time it takes to smoke a cigar that costs no more than five cents he returned with a box, just large enough to hold ten cans of opium.

I walked once around the block, and when I returned the official was standing in the shadow of a doorway watching the store of the opium dealer so intently that he did not see me until I said:

"Hello! How bus'ness?"

He started, stared and frowned, but made no answer, so I walked on directly to the store. The dealer told me at once that he had the opium, but this time he did not take me down to the secret place beneath his store to show it to me, and I was careful not to take it in my hands for an instant.

"How much?" I asked.

"Two hundred dollars," he replied, without once asking me how much I would pay.

"That cheap."

"Yes; I get 'im cheap."

When I told him that I did not have the money with me he offered me credit, though he had always been careful on other occasions to demand payment down, and he urged me to take it at once; but I did not want that opium

then, for I knew I could not carry it far while the official was watching.

Quan Quock Ming was sitting very straight in his big carved chair of velvet and soft cushions—such a chair as the wealthier and lazier of the *fan quai* use—and it seemed none too large for him. His chin was high in the air and his horn-rimmed spectacles were low on his nose, which was aimed at his three wives sewing in the corner. From the severity of his countenance and the diligence with which they were working I knew they must have idled during the day and had not earned as much as usual from the shirt factory across the street. They did not raise their eyes from their work, nor did Quan Quock Ming turn his gaze from them or respond to my salutations. After I had seated myself and lighted a cigar he growled deep in his throat:

“Hai-e-e! Indolence is wicked and disgusting!”

The wives of Quan bent their heads lower and sewed faster. Then their honorable husband slowly filled his long pipe, throwing fierce glances at the women from time to time, lighted the tobacco, arranged his feet on a cushion, leaned far back in his chair, folded his hands over his paunch and looked at me questioningly.

“That is true, sir scholar,” said I, thinking of his remark concerning the wickedness of indolence.

"Did you come here to tell me that I speak the truth, Fung Ching?" he growled.

"No, sir scholar."

"Then perhaps you came to tell me that I do not speak the truth?"

"No, not that, sir scholar. You always speak wisely and truthfully, even concerning those things that are dead and buried in the remote past, as well as of events that are yet to occur in the distant future. You are a sage and a prophet."

"Then, like the foolish foreign devil uttering a prayer to Sheung Tai, the One Great God, you came to tell me what I already know."

"No, sir scholar. I can tell you nothing that you do not know, unless it be a new-born fact, which, by mere chance, has not yet been revealed to you by the gods. I have tonight some news that possibly you have not heard."

"Then speak of it at once and cease annoying me with senseless chatter, such as is employed by the lazy wives of an indulgent husband."

"There is a Jew man—"

"A *fan quai*?"

"Of a certainty he is a foreign devil. Is there a single Jew in the world who is not?"

"Of a certainty there is a whole village of them among our own people, and they have lived in the Middle Kingdom since the time of the illustrious Kung-foo-tsze. They are Chinese in every way, except that they are better bargainers

in the markets, and, it is said, formerly worshiped a ram's horn in their temple. But what of this one?"

Then I told Quan Quock Ming what the official had said of the prison, and what had been done in the matter of the opium, not forgetting to mention the peculiar manner of the dealer.

"I am certain it is a trap prepared by the official, sir scholar," I said in conclusion.

"It is a trap, surely," he agreed. "What do you purpose doing in the matter?"

"I purpose to keep out of it, sir scholar."

"What marvelous wisdom you display, Fung Ching! I propose that you walk into it."

"And get caught like a rat?"

"That is true, Fung Ching," and Quan Quock Ming shook his head sadly. "I had forgotten that you have less intelligence than a rat. It knows how to spring a trap and carry off the bait."

"The opium is the bait," I reflected. "And you think I should carry it away?"

"Certainly. It is there awaiting you."

"But you forget, sir scholar, that it is watched by a vengeful official and a shrewd Jew."

"That is true. I had forgotten—the Jew. You will carry off the official's bait and leave the Jew in the trap. That will be better still. And we may as well take a little profit out of him at the same time. Yes, that will be quite proper," and Quan Quock Ming nodded his head many

times, as though it were all settled except the taking and walking away.

"How is it possible to do such a thing, sir scholar?" I asked.

"I will think for you, Fung Ching, if you will act for me. All that is necessary is that you have sufficient intelligence to comprehend what is said to you and do as you are told. Is that possible?"

"I think so, sir scholar."

"Then listen while I speak. Delay the matter of purchasing the opium with whatever excuses you can offer, and come here tomorrow evening. In the meantime I will interrogate the gods with the question sticks and learn how our enterprise will prosper. Then I will tell you how it is to be done."

I sat staring at Quan Quock Ming stupidly, for I could not think how it would be possible. He had given me the parting cup of tea (it was seldom necessary for him to remind me in this polite way that it was time to take my departure), and I had drunk it and was still staring, forgetting even to keep my cigar alight, when he asked:

"Will you have another cup of tea, Fung Ching, or shall I throw you downstairs, as a *fan quai* policeman would a Chinese gambler? No? Then walk your way slowly."

So I left him watching his wives and smoking his pipe, while they sewed and said nothing.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAP IS SPRUNG

THE official was in his doorway and the opium dealer was in his store, and both seemed greatly interested in me, though I pretended that I did not see the one and had very little to say to the other. I told the dealer I had been too busy to get the money, and as there was no urgency about the matter I would not take the opium for a day or two.

Still he held me by the arm and stroked my back, telling me many times that I was an honest man and could take, not only the opium, but anything else I desired, paying for it when it was convenient. But I could think of little save the official on the opposite side of the street, his revengeful face, his sharp eyes and his strong grip, and I wanted nothing so much as to get beyond the reach and the sight of him.

When I went to Quan Quock Ming's home that evening the prophet was sitting on the very edge of his chair with his hands on his knees and shouting at his wives, who were putting five-tael cans of opium into boxes; and he was very red in the face from the exertion of it. There were ten boxes and ten cans to the box.

Each can was full, as I knew by the weight of them, and not one had paid the tax of the government, as I saw by the labels on them.

"Where did you get so much opium, sir scholar?" I asked in great surprise, for I had never before seen so much at one time.

"What opium, Fung Ching?" and he looked at me over his spectacles as though he, too, were surprised.

"The opium your women are putting in boxes."

"Where would you say an honest man got it? Would you say it was given to him, or that he bought it, or found it, or stole it?"

"I cannot say, sir scholar. What do you intend doing with it?"

"Fung Ching, you have forgotten the lesson I taught you in the sampan in Hongkong harbor, when you were whining like a sick puppy over leaving your home. Did I not pull your ears and slap your face to teach you that you should keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth closed?"

"That is true, sir scholar?"

"It is true that you have forgotten the lesson. Now keep your mouth closed and your ears open, for it is my intention to speak. Tomorrow you will go to the dealer in opium and say to him:

"I have one hundred five-tael cans of opium that has not paid the government tax."

"You will see, if you remember to keep your eyes open, that he will open his even wider. Then say to him:

" 'I must hide this opium at once, for the government officials are very vigilant and may find it.'

"When he opens his mouth wide and stares at you, say to him:

" 'Let me put this opium in the secret place beneath your store.'

"He will frown and wink his eyes very quickly, seeming not to think well of the matter, and then you must say:

" 'We can make a great profit out of this, for opium is becoming very scarce.'

"Then he will rub one ear and stroke his chin while considering the matter. He may offer some objections at first, but they will be only for the purpose of gaining time while he is thinking how he can put you in prison and get the opium without risk or expense to himself. It is certain, however, that he will tell you to fetch it at night and hide it beneath his store. Do you understand, Fung Ching?"

"Yes, sir scholar, but why should we send this opium there, and how can we ever get it again?"

Quan Quock Ming raised his hand as though he would strike me and frowned on me long and fiercely. Then he shook his head as though in great sorrow and said:

"Fung Ching, you are a great fool. It is very unfortunate. But listen. I am about to speak again. You will come with a light wagon at night and carry these boxes to the place beneath the dealer's store. Then you will say to him:

" 'Fetch the other box which I will buy from you and place it here.'

"When the eleven boxes are together you will take the tops from them so he may see there are ten cans in each. Then say to him:

" 'I think I hear someone moving about upstairs.'

"When he has gone to see about the matter, quickly take one can out of each of these ten boxes, place them in the box he sold you, and the ten cans you take from that box put in the place of the ten you took from these. Remember where in these boxes you place each can of the opium he sold you, so you may find all again without difficulty. Do you understand, Fung Ching?"

"Yes, I am to put ten cans of this opium in his box and put his opium in these boxes so I can find it again."

"Your intelligence is increasing, Fung Ching. Though I still have to teach you what to say, as one would a parrot, I no longer have to show you what to do, as one would a monkey. Now, when the dealer returns to tell you that no one is about, say to him:

" 'I wish to test the opium I have brought,

for the one who sold it is not as honest as you.'

"He will want to see it tested, too. Then take from these ten boxes, one at a time, the cans you bought from him, opening and testing each. Be careful to take everyone of the ten cans the dealer sold you, for we want no cheap opium. I know what is in these cans."

"But why, sir scholar, should we quarrel with the quality if we are to get it for nothing?"

"Because you negotiated for first quality opium, and it is due you, Fung Ching. You would be cheated to take any other, and you would lose your face as a maker of bargains. When you have tested it all, you will say to the dealer:

"'I am satisfied and ready to go, but first look about very carefully to see that no one is watching.'

"When he goes, quickly put the ten cans you have tested into one box, replace the other cans and put the covers on all the boxes. When he returns to tell you that no one is watching, start away, but pause and say to him:

"'I am foolish. I forgot that I must have one box in the morning early.'

"Then take the box of tested opium and carry it away with you."

"But you forget the official, sir scholar. He will be watching to take me to prison."

"I have forgotten nothing, Fung Ching. If

you have any fear you may look to see if he is standing in the doorway before you go with the opium. But you will not see him. Of that I am as certain as I am that you are a great fool—and nothing can be more certain than that."

It was just as Quan Quock Ming had said. The dealer opened his eyes very wide when he saw so many cans and watched me hungrily while I was testing it. And I carried away ten cans of first quality opium, and the official was not there to grip me by the arm, put irons on my wrists and take me to prison.

I carried the box to Quan Quock Ming's home, but he did not even glance up from "The Book of Odes" he was reading, and paused only long enough to say:

"Put it beneath the opium bunk in the small room, Fung Ching."

I did as he ordered and sat down to smoke until he should finish his reading; but it was the long "Ode to King Seuen on the Occasion of a Great Drought," and he read very slowly to the last word. Then he asked:

"What is the quality of it, Fung Ching?"

"The best, sir scholar."

"Then I shall test it in the pipe tonight. Tomorrow you will return to the dealer and say to him:

"'I am afraid to keep the opium hidden beneath your store. Will you buy it?'

"He will bargain, and haggle and delay, but

he will buy. He may not take it all, but sell all he will take, making as good a bargain as you can—but sell. If he does not buy it all bring one box away with you. And be sure to get your money for the opium you sell. Do not give credit. If the dealer has not so much in his store, wait until he gets it. Take this can of third quality opium with you, and when you are in the secret place beneath the store hide it, but do not let him know of it."

"But you have forgotten that the official will be watching in the daytime, even if he is not there at night, and if I carry away so much as a thimbleful I will be taken to prison."

"Fung Ching! I forget nothing," he bel-
lowed. "Do as I bid you."

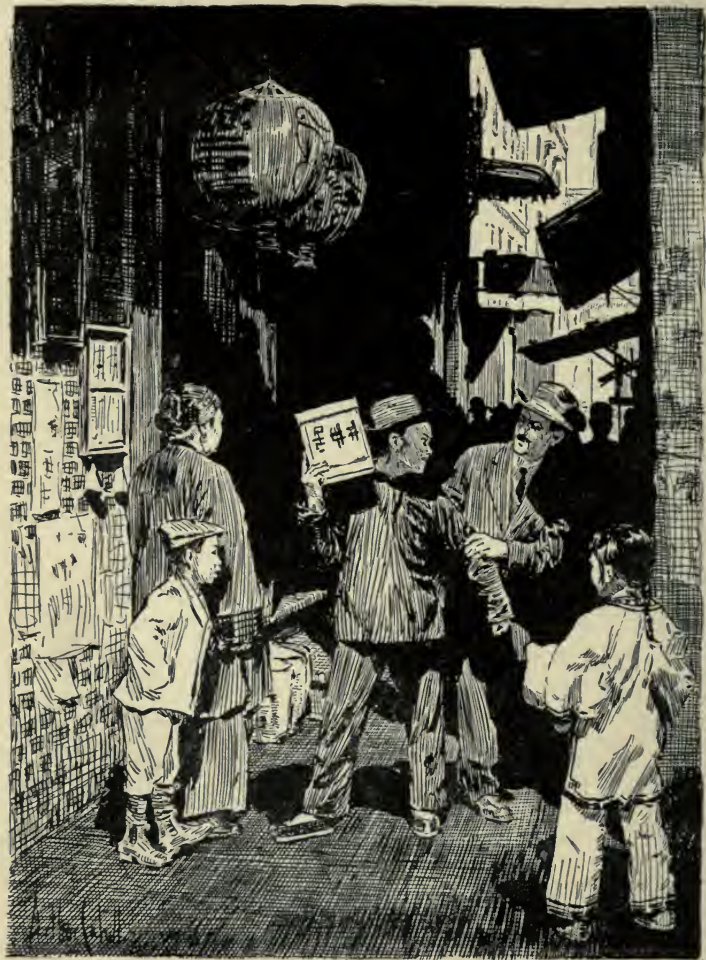
I went the next day, but slowly and fearfully, to bargain with the dealer, but when I saw the official watching from the doorway across the street my legs carried me quickly away. I was then convinced that Quan Quock Ming had made some mistake, so I hurried to the place where he told fortunes on the street.

"The official is watching, sir scholar."

"Watching who—what?"

"The store of the opium dealer. If I carry any away I shall surely be arrested. I will not do it."

"Fung Ching, do as I bade you," and he spoke so quietly and deliberately that I knew he was very angry with me.



"I've got you this time, Little Pete," said the official.....183

"No, I shall not go to prison for you."

"Fung Ching, I tell you that the official can do nothing. Go at once and attend to the matter, or I shall know that you are no longer a good friend of mine, but a malignant enemy, and I shall call down the curses of the gods upon you."

I went slowly and reluctantly and with many forebodings, even though Quan Quock Ming had been my very best friend for many years, and was a sage and a prophet. And as I went I weighed the risks I ran—the risk of years in prison on the one hand and of Quan Quock Ming's enmity on the other—and they seemed of equal weight until I threw his wisdom into the scale. Then I said to myself:

"I shall have faith in my friend."

I did not look again to see if the official were still there for fear my faith would fly at the sight of him, and my knees were weak and my voice tremulous while I bargained for the sale of the opium. I am certain that the mere thought of the official cost me at least a dollar a can. Still, I sold ninety cans—all but one box—for \$19.50 a can. I had the money in my pocket and the box upon my shoulder and had only started up the street when I heard:

"Fung Ching!" and once more I felt that grip upon my arm. "I've got you this time, Little Pete," said the official, and he smiled in a very unfriendly way when he used my friendly name.

When he placed the irons on my wrists and led me to prison Quan Quock Ming's friendship and wisdom seemed as nothing and my cell as the whole world.

As soon as my *hing ti*—my cousins of the same family name—could give their stores as security that I would not run away, I was set free until such time as I should go before the magistrate to make my answer. Filled with anger I hurried to Quan Quock Ming. He was sitting behind his little table on the sidewalk with his hands tucked in his sleeves, turning his head slowly from side to side as he looked first up and then down the street, calling as usual for patronage:

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!"

"I did as you told me," I said angrily, being careful not to mention that he was a scholar, "and now see what has come of it!"

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!" he repeated, paying no attention whatever to me.

"Quan Quock Ming, I was taken to prison by the official, and I shall go for a much longer time unless something is done. It is all your fault. Now what is to be done about it?"

Quan Quock Ming yawned and repeated his droning call:

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!"

"This is very bad fortune for me, and it will be for you, too, Quan Quock Ming," I said as I seized him by the arm, "unless you help me."

"Do you want your fortune told?" he asked.

"It takes no prophet to tell me that I am in serious trouble, all because I was foolish enough to do as you told me."

He ignored my words and manner and shook the question sticks in their urn as he would do for any patron. Then he held them out to me. I took one and flung it on the table before him.

"I know naught of you and naught of your ancestry—" that is what he always said to strangers when he told their fortunes, and he said the same to me, though he knew more of me than I did of myself—"but this reveals all to me," and he tapped the question stick with his long finger nail and smiled knowingly.

After he had looked through his spectacles at me for a moment—and it seemed that he was mocking me—he studied the mysterious characters on the stick for a long time, and then said:

"Your name is—let me see. What is it? Oh, yes, it is Fung Ching. Your father's name—"

"Never mind that, fortune-teller, I know what my father's name was. Tell me, if you can, what I am to do."

"Your father's name was Fung Doo You. He is now dead, and that is a great piece of good fortune for him, for it would grieve him to know his son is a fool. All fools are lucky. You are

very lucky, therefore you must be a very great fool. Pay me and walk your way."

"Tell me first what I am to do," I commanded in a threatening tone.

"Do? Do nothing—nothing except what your wise friends tell you to do. I tell you to do nothing."

"You can tell me much to do when there is money to be gained and risks to be taken, and you are always careful to take half the money and none of the risks."

"Fortunes! Fortunes! Good fortune for all!"

I flung a twenty-five-cent piece upon the table and went my way, not knowing what to do but reflect upon the gravity of my position. My clansmen were angry with me that I should have done all that Quan Quock Ming ordered in this matter of the opium, after he had once been the cause of my imprisonment in the chock chee business. They would do little to help me and he would do nothing, but their anger toward me was as nothing compared to my resentment toward him.

The very next day I was to go before the lesser magistrate, who listens to the complaints of officials, for him to decide whether I should go before the higher magistrate for trial, and I had not even bought a lawyer. The *fan quai* newspapers had much to say about "Little Pete," the notorious highbinder and gambler, who had

been caught with a whole box of opium that had not paid the tax; and the official had talked to the writers of news, saying that "Little Pete" was the same man who had sold forged chock chces, but had escaped prison; that he had watched for a long time to catch "Little Pete," and he could not possibly escape this time, but would surely be sent to prison for a long time.

I sat before the magistrate thinking many things, but saying nothing at all, while the official told how he had learned I was dealing in opium and had taken ten cans to the Jew to sell to me. Then the dealer told how I had bought it, and both said I had carried it away on my shoulder. The very same box and the very same cans I had taken from the dealer's place of business were brought in, and one who understands much about drugs held up his hand and took an oath.

"Have you seen what is in these cans?" he was asked.

"I have," he answered.

"What is it?"

"Molasses."

The official believed the Jew man had tricked him, searched his place of business and found the can of third quality opium I had hidden in the secret place beneath the store. And while the Jew man lay in prison awaiting trial, Quan Quock Ming, my very best friend, lay on his bunk and smoked first-quality opium.

CHAPTER VI

THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS

QUAN QUOCK MING had finished his evening meal, his four pipes of opium and his eight pinches of tobacco, and now he was sleeping, while his three wives, who never slept, were cleaning the dishes, the pots and the kitchen, so all would be in readiness when their honorable husband should call for another meal.

Quan Quock Ming's kitchen was very small, and his wives, his utensils and his furniture nearly filled it. Quan Quock Ming's cushioned chair was very large, but he more than filled it, and at that moment he seemed to be holding himself in it by clasping his hands over his protruding abdomen. Quan Quock Ming's throat was enormous, but it would not accommodate a single large breath, and a small one could get through only with much effort and noise.

Quan Quock Ming's head lolled on the back of his chair, his big horn-rimmed spectacles were on his forehead, his knees were wide apart, and his stockinged feet with soles pressed together, rested on a carpet-covered stool.

Whether it was my entrance, his own snoring or the clatter of tongues and pans in the

kitchen that awakened him I cannot say, but he stopped in the middle of a snore to gasp, in the middle of the gasp to yawn, and in the middle of the yawn to growl; as he always did when disturbed:

"Can one never rest, even in his home? One may as well be a dog in the streets."

I seated myself on a teak-wood stool and puffed my cigar until he had finished grumbling and yawning and was ready to speak with me; and that was not until he had shuffled his feet into his slippers, filled his long pipe and puffed three times.

"What have you heard and seen today, Fung Ching, that may be of profit to us?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir scholar," I answered.

"Have you then become deaf and blind, or have you been sleeping all day like a confirmed smoker of opium?"

"No, sir scholar. I have been about the stores, the streets, the gambling houses and the lottery places, but one hears little more than old women's gossip—nothing that would profit us."

"Surely you are a fool, Fung Ching—as great a fool as Moy Hung, the rag-picker. He never sees anything but refuse, and to him a first quality gem would be but a bit of glass. He once gave away the stamp from an old letter that was afterward sold to a foolish foreign devil for \$150. I have just said you are a fool, and even that trifling bit of information is worth some-

thing to someone. How many times must I tell you that every word that is uttered and everything that is done has a value, providing one can find the person who wants to know of it? Let us pick over the rags you have gathered today and see if there be not something of worth concealed among them. What have you heard?"

"Ching Jung won \$84 in the lottery."

"That is worth something. I told his fortune this morning and predicted good luck. Tomorrow I shall make him pay double or treble the fee for another prediction."

"Jue Toy's father is dying."

"That is good, too. I shall advise Jue Toy to have the priest Soo-hoo Hung, so that I may get a commission on the burial fee. What else?"

"The Ning Yung Benevolent Association has decided to send four old men back to the Middle Kingdom on the next steamer, and has set aside \$200 to pay their expenses."

"We shall see what can be done about that. Anything else?"

"Four young men who were arrested last month for being in this country unlawfully are to be sent back to the Middle Kingdom. The officials of the government so decided today."

"What would they pay to remain here?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars at the very least."

"And neither the government nor the officials

will accept their money and permit them to remain?"

"No, sir scholar; and besides the government must pay the steamship company to carry them back."

"Then there are four old men who wish to go, and four young men who wish to stay, and money could be obtained by arranging it so that each could do as he wishes?"

"That is true, sir scholar, but there is nothing to be done about it."

"The government, then, will waste money to send men away when it could get money to permit them to remain. What a wasteful government! And the officials will not accept the money secretly, either to save it for the government or to profit themselves. What foolish officials!"

"You speak truly, sir scholar; and now you can see clearly why nothing can be done about it."

"On the contrary, Fung Ching, I see clearly that we can do much. We shall trade old men for young and make a profit on both."

"That can never be done. The young men are in prison, and they are closely guarded."

"Then we shall find a way to get the young men out and the old men in. If neither the government nor the officials will trade with us, perhaps the jailers will. Do you know the jailers, Fung Ching?"

"Who should know them better, since I have twice been in prison on your account?"

"Not on my account, Fung Ching, but on account of your own stupidity; and even that misfortune may now be used to our advantage. Will the jailers accept presents and grant favors?"

"They do not even put their hands behind their backs, sir scholar, but extend them like beggars, and without closing even one eye. For a few small coins they will permit visitors to enter the prison at forbidden hours and carry in opium to their friends, or will take prisoners out to places of amusement."

"Then it is all very easy. Go at once to the Ning Yung Association and make a contract to send each of the four old men back to the Middle Kingdom for \$40. Then go to the relatives of the young men and make a contract to procure their release for \$250 each—or as much more as they will pay. Then go to the jailers and give them \$80 to let the young men out and the old men in. There will be a profit of nearly \$1,000 for us in this one transaction, Fung Ching, and doubtless we shall have many more when it is known among our people that we are able to do this, for there are many old men who wish to go, and many young men who wish to stay. Attend to this at once."

All that Quan Quock Ming said seemed quite feasible and proper, and I had started toward the door to do as he advised when I had a thought that gave me a cold painful feeling just above my belt and made my knees weaken under me. Then

I sat down very quickly and opened and shut my mouth several times without saying a word.

"What is the matter?" asked Quan Quock Ming. "Are you ill?"

"No, sir scholar. I was only thinking, and it hurt my stomach."

"What thought can you have that is so weighty it hurts?"

"This thing cannot be done, sir scholar."

"It can be done, and we shall do it."

"I will have nothing to do with it, sir scholar."

"Why not?"

I did not answer at once, for I still felt the pain of the thought, but finally asked:

"What would you do, sir scholar, if one of your wives borrowed money and lost it in gambling?"

"I would do my duty, Fung Ching. Yes, I would do my duty, no matter if I esteemed her as highly as one does a younger sister. But what has that to do with the matter?"

"What, sir scholar, would you deem to be your duty under the circumstances?"

"I would surely beat her for borrowing the money; then I would certainly beat her again for gambling; and I would, without doubt, beat her once more for losing. Upon reflection, I would, in all probability, give her yet another beating to teach her that I am master of my own household."

"But you would not seek to injure the man who had lent her the money?"

"No; I might try to borrow more from him, or have her do it for me, if I should need it. But what has this to do with our business?"

"Nor would you consider that the lender has done you an injury?"

"No; I should consider that he had done me a favor in showing me my wife's folly and his own generosity. Why are you speaking so foolishly?"

"The foreign devils are peculiar. They are like the married snakes of the Middle Kingdom that go in pairs, and if a person so much as touches one its mate will follow him until it kills him. The official who works secretly for the government is well named by our countrymen, for they call him 'the Snake in the Grass.' He thinks I did his wife an injury when I lent her money to bet on the races, and threatened to complain to a magistrate about her failure to repay me unless he ceased prosecuting me. He has since promised many times to send me to prison for a long time, and I do not want to go. He is in Chinatown day and night, sir scholar, and is watching me constantly."

"But what has that to do with this matter?"

"He is the official who arrested the four young men, and he will see that they are sent away. If we should attempt to trade the old men for them he will surely know of it and send me to prison. I will have nothing to do with it."

"Have you not yet learned that there is no reason to fear him? Twice he has placed irons on your wrists, and twice he has failed to keep them there. He will fail again. Be cautious when you deal with the jailers, and he will know nothing of it. Go, now, and do as I bade you."

His imperative tone showed me that further discussion would be useless if not impossible, so I went, but slowly and reluctantly, thinking now of Quan Quock Ming, the sage and prophet, who had always been my very best friend, and then of the Snake in the Grass, the shrewd and vengeful official, who had long been my very worst enemy. And to myself I said:

"I will do as my friend commands, but surely someone who is necessary to the success of his plan will refuse to act, and that will be the end of it."

But the secretary of the Ning Yung Association was glad to be relieved of the care of the old men, and earn a small fee, the relatives of the prisoners were willing to pay any reasonable sum to procure their release, and the jailers were eager to engage in anything that would profit them.

"It will be necessary to arrange matters with the assistant of the Snake in the Grass," they explained. "He takes the prisoners to the wharf and places them on the ship. We will see him about it."

I hoped he would not consent, but within two

days I was told that he would permit the exchange for \$20 a man. I raised the price on the young men to \$300 each, hoping their relatives would refuse to pay it; but they readily agreed, and there was nothing to do but carry out our plans.

The night before the steamer's departure the assistant took the young men from prison, placed them in a closed carriage and had them driven to a dark corner, and there let them out, taking in the four old men who had been waiting with me; and the next day they were on their way to the Middle Kingdom.

Quan Quock Ming and I were greatly pleased with so large a profit so easily earned, but what pleased us much more was the thought that we had outwitted the Snake in the Grass, whom I saw every day walking quickly on the streets, and every night lurking in the shadows, but always following me with vindictive eyes.

Soon afterward two more young men were in prison waiting to be sent away, and when I found two old men willing to go I went to the prison to make the arrangements with the jailers.

"Nothing doing, Pete"—they said. "Someone has been whispering to the Snake in the Grass, and he has been asking questions. We denied everything, but he is watching, and we can do nothing."

CHAPTER VI

THROWING DUST IN THE SNAKE'S EYES

It is quite true that Quan Quock Ming earned much money by the telling of fortunes upon the street corner and the giving of advice at his home, but each day's earnings could be counted easily upon the fingers. It is also true that he had come by much more money through business ventures that required no more capital than his great wisdom and gift of prophecy; and I have no doubt at all that every cent that came into his hands beyond what was required for the frugal maintenance of his household was sacrificed to the gods at the Tien How Temple, for he often told me that was the truth of it. Therefore I could never understand why he should require the abacus that always lay on the table at his right hand.

When I went to Quan Quock Ming's home late in the evening to tell him what I had heard I was in great haste and entered abruptly, though with little commotion. He was squatting on the floor before his camphor-wood chest, flicking the counters of the abacus to and fro and mumbling sums as he counted them. He did not hear me when I opened the door, but as soon as my footsteps sounded on the floor within he sprang up, slammed the lid of the chest and shouted:

"I'm a poor man! I have nothing!"

Then as he recognized me he looked at me long and sharply while he panted for breath, and finally found enough to ask in a severe tone:

"Fung Ching, why do you come into my home stealthily and like a thief?"

"I came as I usually do, sir scholar," I answered, "except that I came more hurriedly and more noisily, but you did not hear me; and you forgot to lock the door. I wanted to speak with you concerning the matter of trading old men for young. I have—"

"Yes, Fung Ching," he interrupted, "I was just making some calculations concerning the profit of that enterprise when you disturbed me. I find—"

"There is no need of making any further calculations, sir scholar. It is—"

"Fung Ching, I was making calculations when you disturbed me by entering so unceremoniously, and I was telling you that when you interrupted me again quite rudely. Now do not be so impolite as to repeat your offense. I find that if we trade six old men for six young men in each month we will make \$1800, to say nothing of trading old women for young girls, where the profit is much greater. This is even more profitable than our enterprise of making certificates for our countrymen who slipped across the unguarded borders, and that would have brought wealth to you and satisfaction to the gods if you had not been so incautious as to let the Snake in the Grass

catch you. Let him now arrest as many as he pleases, and let the magistrate order all to be sent back to the Middle Kingdom. We have but to find old persons to trade. Perhaps some day I may return, and you can trade me for a young man."

"To fulfill the oath of the chicken's head and see that your father's bones are properly interred?" I asked.

"Hai-iel"

He seized a stool, and I thought he intended to strike me with it. His face grew red and then pale while he stood glaring at me. Then he sank down into a chair and seemed to breathe with great difficulty.

"I have not the means. I am still a very poor man." He was almost whimpering.

"Now may I speak, sir scholar?" I asked when he had composed himself.

"Yes—but not of that."

"Very well. We shall make no more profit, and we may lose what we have already earned, for someone has whispered to the Snake in the Grass about our business, and he will interfere again. I will have nothing more to do with it."

"What has he found out?"

"Nothing to a certainty, but he suspects a great deal, is asking many questions and is watching me even more closely. The young and the old may go where they please, but I am not going to prison."

"You are a great coward, Fung Ching."

"It is easy for you to say that, sir scholar, so long as you sit here and advise and count the profits, but take no risks. You do not know the feel of irons on the wrists and steel bars about you. I do. You know very well that I have had a price put on my head many times in the tong wars, and you know that shots have been fired at me by fighting men who would earn the rewards, and you know they did not frighten me. But there is one thing I am afraid of, and that one thing is prison. It is bad enough to be locked up for a few hours; it would be much worse to be imprisoned for many years; and it would be very much worse to be sent to jail by the Snake in the Grass. He is not watching you as he is me, or you would be fearful too."

"Listen to my words, Fung Ching. You are in no danger. While the Snake in the Grass is watching you he can see no one else; and you say he is watching you constantly. Is that not true?"

"Yes, sir scholar."

"You do not know what my wives are doing in the next room, do you, Fung Ching?"

"No, sir scholar."

"That is because you are looking at me and not at them. While the Snake in the Grass is watching you he is not watching the old men or the young men. Well, we shall permit him to watch you, and we shall then make the trade. Listen, and do not fail to do as I tell you."

I listened respectfully, for Quan Quock Ming is a sage, and then I obeyed him, for he is my friend.

"I am taking great chances, Pete, in speaking to you at all," said the assistant of the Snake in the Grass, "for if I were seen I would lose my position. We went into this together, and I do not want to see you caught."

"You are afraid that if I am caught I will tell of your part in it," said I. "You need not be. The Chinese never talk. If I am caught I shall have to go to prison, I suppose, but I will take no one else with me."

"Look out for yourself. The boss is laying a trap for you. He has questioned me closely and he has told me that if any one tries to substitute old men for the prisoners on the next trip to the wharf, not to offer any objections, but to watch everything that is done. It is certain that he will be following the carriage, and as soon as the prisoners are let but he will arrest them and you too."

The next night I saw the carriage leave the prison with the two young men inside with the assistant, and I saw it come slowly down the dark street on the way to the wharf. And I saw, too, that the Snake in the Grass was following stealthily on the other side of the street, keeping close to the buildings where the shadows are darkest, but I pretended not to see him, even when I knew he was watching me.

When the carriage came nearly opposite to me

I walked out with two old men and signaled for the driver to stop, and then went around to the door that was in view of the Snake in the Grass. From the corner of my eye I say that he had come closer and was watching me from a dark doorway, but he did not see the two young men get out of the carriage on the farther side and slip around the corner while two more old men who had been waiting in the shadows got in. After conversing with them for a moment, I, with the two old men who had accompanied me, turned and walked away, and the carriage was driven on toward the wharf with the Snake in the Grass following.

This is what was said at the steamer's side, as the assistant told it to me:

"He must have been warned," said the Snake in the Grass. "Did you do it?"

"I know nothing about the matter," replied the assistant. "I did only as you ordered. It is your business."

"Well, can you explain why the substitution was not made?"

"It was; and while you were standing watching it. I supposed you knew what you were doing."

The Snake in the Grass looked into the carriage and saw it was true. He swore a great deal at first, then searched Chinatown for the two men, and when he could not find them told his assistant to say nothing of the matter. And the two old men went back to the Middle Kingdom.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD WOMAN'S BRIBE

QUAN QUOCK MING and I were still laughing over the success of our plans when a clansman of mine entered hurriedly.

"I am in great trouble," he said, "and I beg your assistance. I came to this country when I was a child, and in order that I might always go and come freely my kinsmen proved that I was born here. Three times I have returned to the Middle Kingdom, and three times I have brought back a wife. The first two I sold for slaves at a great profit, but the magistrate has wickedly decided that the third is not really my wife, though I paid \$200 gold for her in Canton, and he has ordered that she be sent back, though I have been put to an expense of \$650 in bringing her here, and she is now worth \$2300.

"Now I have been told that you, cousin, and you, sir scholar, can adjust such matters. I will pay \$1000 and procure an old woman to return in her place if you can arrange it."

"Cousin, that cannot be done," said I.

"It can be done, and we will do it," declared Quan Quock Ming, "but you must pay \$1250."

"Sir scholar," said I, disregarding his frowns,

"the Snake in the Grass cannot be deceived again by the same trick."

"Then we shall think of a new one. What right has he to interfere in my business merely because he wants to send you to prison? Hai-e-e! He is very wicked. Will you pay \$1250?"

"It is a very large sum, but I will pay it."

"It is not possible, sir scholar, to do this," I declared.

"Do as I bid you and say no more about it," ordered Quan Quock Ming.

A high official of the government was here investigating the going and coming of my countrymen and their dealings with other officials, and acting under Quan Quock Ming's instructions I went to him and told him that the Snake in the Grass had traded young men for old and was doubtless making a fine profit from it. And the assistant confirmed what I had told, saying that he had had no part in it except to follow the orders given him by his superior.

"You must help me trap him," said the official. "Make an exchange and give him marked coin." And then to the assistant he said: "Follow the instructions you receive, and you may have a chance for promotion."

I was certain that the Snake in the Grass would take no money from me, and would arrest me if I offered it, but I did not tell the official that.

"It will be very easy," said Quan Quock Ming.

"It is surely impossible," said I.

"Then we shall do that which is impossible."

The Snake in the Grass saw the carriage leave the prison with his assistant and the girl inside; he followed, eager, alert and soft-footed as a tiger cat stalking a hare. He saw the carriage stop at a dark corner, and he saw the girl leave it and an old woman take her place; but he did not see what his eager eyes sought most hungrily—Little Pete. He hurried forward and seized the girl, and as he approached the carriage the old woman inside handed him an envelope. He opened it and found some paper money that had been marked by the higher official, and a letter that he read by the light of a match. This is what was written:

The rest of the money will be paid by me at the wharf.

LITTLE PETE.

"Smith, you look after this girl and then come to the wharf," he ordered, and he took the assistant's place in the carriage.

He said not a word but smiled often during the drive, and when the carriage stopped he peered out cautiously this way and that, but he did not see Little Pete. He saw the higher official walking quickly toward the carriage. The Snake in the Grass stepped out to greet him, but before he could say one word the official brushed by him, looked into the vehicle and then placed a hand upon his shoulder, saying:

"You are under arrest."

"What for?"

"You know well enough without asking any questions. You took a girl from the prison and this is an old woman. I shall have to search you."

When the official had found the money and read the letter he asked:

"What explanation have you to make concerning this?"

"I was laying a trap for Little Pete."

"I suppose you were also laying a trap for Little Pete when you made that substitution on the 'ast steamer?"

"Yes, but he got away from me."

"I have found nothing concerning that transaction in your reports, and you know I am investigating this business. How do you explain that fact?"

"I have already told you that I was trying to trap Little Pete, and I had personal reasons for wanting to do it alone. When it was accomplished the results would have been reported. Here is Smith—" the assistant had just come up— "he knows what I was doing."

"All I know about it," declared the assistant, "is that you told me not to interfere in any substitution, and afterward ordered me not to say anything about it."

"If you were trying, as you say, to trap Little Pete, why did you not arrest him when he gave

you this money that I marked and gave to him?"

"He did not give it to me. That was given to me by the woman in the carriage. Smith saw her. I intended to arrest him when he gave me the balance as he promised in the letter."

"Where is the girl that was in prison?"

"I told Smith to take her into custody, as I wanted her for a witness."

"You gave me no such orders," declared the assistant. "You told me to look after her and come here. I delivered her to her friends."

"You know who gave me that envelope. Tell him."

"I saw Little Pete give it to you."

"That is a damnable lie!" shouted the Snake in the Grass. "This is a conspiracy to ruin me!"

The higher official turned to the carriage, but it was empty. The old woman had disappeared.

"Where is Little Pete?" cried the Snake in the Grass. "Where is he? He may tell the truth," and he looked about him like a rat in a corner.

"Yes, I will tell the truth," said I, stepping from behind the carriage.

"Did you give me that money and that letter?"

I looked straight into his white face and staring eyes as I answered: "Yes."

"You lie!" he screamed, and he snatched a revolver from his pocket.

The others sprang upon him, and as I fled I heard a struggle and then a shot.

The ignorant foreign devils said his suicide was a confession of guilt, but my people know that when a man takes his life it is proof of his innocence. Thus the truth is often misunderstood. He said I lied when I told of the payment of the money, but he would have known it was the truth if he had found the clothing in the carriage—for I was the old woman who rode with him.

BOOK IV

THE DAUGHTERS OF QUAN

CHAPTER I

A LITTLE FOREIGN DEVIL

WHEN Fong Fah bore her honorable husband a daughter the face of the sage was not completely lost, but a cloud of disappointment shaded it darkly.

When Suey Sum, the slave girl, had been bought, delivered and installed in the home of the prophet as a secondary wife the glow of a new hope drove the shadows away.

"Now I shall have a son to preserve my memory and worship his ancestors," said Quan Quock Ming.

"Aih-yah!" wailed Suey Sum. "Never to have my freedom! Never to see my mother again!"

"As I have borne my husband only a daughter I can expect nothing else," thought Fong Fah, and she went about the preparation of the evening meal, pausing only to touch Suey Sum lightly on the shoulder and whisper:

"Sh-h-h! Do not cry, younger sister."

The gentleness of Fong Fah and the cooing of

her baby checked the first great flood of Suey Sum's grief, and the affairs of the household proceeded peacefully and harmoniously. Quan Quock Ming devoted the days to instructing me in the classics, telling fortunes and giving advice. Suey Sum slept away the mornings, yawned and stretched for half an hour and then dressed her hair, painted her face and clothed herself in fine apparel. The afternoons she idled away, chatting with Fong Fah, playing with the baby, nibbling at preserved fruits and smoking cigarettes. In the evenings she entertained Quan Quock Ming with odes and ballads, accompanying herself on the *yung kum*, while he smoked his opium, and then sat quite still beside his couch while he dozed.

All day long Fong Fah attended to the duties of the household and sewed for the factory across the street, patiently and diligently, never asking help from Suey Sum or showing any of the authority that properly belongs to the principal wife, but smiling at her frivolities, sympathizing with her sorrows and treating her as an equal in all things.

"Do you never feel anger when our honorable husband neglects you and shows me such favor?" asked Suey Sum.

"Wives, daughters and slaves must be obedient and respectful and live as they are ordered," replied Fong Fah.

When Suey Sum bore Quan Quock Ming a

daughter he paid no further attention either to Fong Fah or Suey Sum. Then the two women became as sisters, attending the house, the sewing and the babies together, and Suey Sum sang no more. except occasionally to hum this ode of T'sin:

"He lodged us in a spacious house,
And plenteous was our fare.
But now at every frugal meal
There's not a scrap to spare.
Alas! alas, that this good man
Could not go on as he began."

Shim Ming, a slave girl, ran away from her owner one day, and though he spent much money he could find no trace of her.

"It is as though she had gone on the back of a dragon," said he to Quan Quock Ming. "What can you advise, sir scholar?"

"Sell her," said Quan Quock Ming.

"Who would be so foolish as to buy a pig that can neither be weighed nor delivered?"

"I will give \$200 for her. With the aid of the gods I may be able to find her," and Shim Ming's owner was glad to get a tenth part of her value.

When he had given the writing of sale and departed with the money, Quan Quock Ming opened the door of a closet and said:

"You may come out, Shim Ming. I have bought you for a third wife. Be sure that you bear me a son."

When Shim Ming gave him a daughter he

merely shook his head, saying: "I endure what the gods inflict."

An impious man would have cursed loudly, and an impatient man would have given all three wives a beating.

Shim Ming was a big boisterous woman, who laughed when she was amused and scolded noisily when she was displeased. She knew her place as third wife, but being always rebellious assumed the authority that belonged to the first wife, did all the marketing, scolded Fong Fah and Suey Sum and laughed at Quan Quock Ming's reproofs.

"If you do not keep your place I shall give you a beating," he once said to her.

Shim Ming flew into a terrible passion, scratched his face, screamed and cursed, and shouted from the windows to all on the street that her husband was beating her. Then a *fan quai* official broke down the door and humiliated Quan Quock Ming greatly by pulling his queue.

"The next time you so disgrace me," said the sage, "I shall thrust you out the front door and close it after you."

Shim Ming, fearing such a disgrace, and Quan Quock Ming, remembering his humiliation, were ever afterward more careful of their conduct toward one another.

Quan Quock Ming, as is customary when one greatly desires sons and has only daughters, gave his girls no names, but referred to them by num-

ber. Ah Yut was as shy as a partridge, as timid as a mouse, but as playful as a kitten—when her honorable father was not there to scowl, or her honorable father's third wife to scold; and she was a little mother to her younger sisters. When she had lived six years she led three-year-old Ah Kee by the hand and carried one-year-old Ah Sam on her back, and watched her with such care that she never lost the cap from the baby's head or the bottle from the pocket of the baby's apron when she went on the street to buy sugar-cane or candy. But if anyone tried to take the baby from her she would yell, and kick, and bite, and scratch like the mother of kittens. At night none could hush the baby so quickly as Ah Yut, and when it was asleep in its own bed she would take Ah Kee in her arms and soothe her until they both slept.

It was not only with the children that Ah Yut was helpful, for often when the women were working hard over the sewing she made the fire in the oil can that stood in the old fireplace and served very well as a stove, putting the ends of the sticks together and blowing them into a flame, or pulling the ends apart when they blazed too quickly, so as to cook the rice without waste of paper or wood.

The three sisters were sitting on the steps at the foot of the stairway one day watching the wonderful happenings on the street, when strange girls spoke to them of the *fan quai* school where children were taught to speak, to read and to

write the language of the foreign devils, where they learned to sing pretty songs and were told wonderful stories. And all the daughters of Qaun wanted very much to go, but it was only little Ah Sam who dared speak of the matter; and it was only her mother who had the courage to mention it to Quan Quock Ming.

"How can it be proper for girls to go to school?" he asked in severe tones. "Why is it necessary for them to learn anything beyond the care of a household? Why should I fatten pigs for someone else?"

Shim Ming slammed doors, upset stools, burned the rice and grumbled until Quan Quock Ming said:

"Ah Sam may attend the *fan quai* school."

Every day when Ah Yut and Ah Kee took their younger sister there and brought her home again, they watched with hungry eyes the other girls with the pretty clothing of the foreign devils and make-believe babies that looked like little women; and they listened with hungry ears to all that was said of the school. Then they walked home slowly and played very quietly with the little things they found in the streets, tying bits of cloth around them, calling them babies and giving them pretty names.

The wonderful *fan quai* woman, whom they had often seen, and who had spoken to them occasionally, walked home with them one day, holding Ah Yut and Ah Kee each by one hand; and

both were at the same time very happy and very fearful, for neither knew the meaning of such kindness, being more accustomed to the jeers of little foreign devils who threw stones. When Ah Sam, who had learned to speak in the foreign tongue, told their mothers that the woman wanted Ah Yut and Ah Kee to go to school too, they ran and hid themselves behind the curtains of a bed and wondered when they peeped out and saw their mothers shedding tears over nothing and saying not a word.

Shim Ming made clothing for Ah Sam after the *fan quai* fashion, and bought for her a large hat adorned with bright ribbons and flowers, and Ah Yut and Ah Kee looked at the things longingly, but dared not ask so much as to touch them. But when they walked to school Ah Sam would sometimes let one of them wear the hat, and though it looked peculiar with the Chinese attire, the lucky one strutted like a viceroy with a three-eyed peacock feather.

Ah Yut and Ah Kee were very proud of Ah Sam, with her learning and her attire, and one day when Louie Hong's boy pointed the important fingers of his two hands at her and shouted in the foreign language:

"No likee *hing ti*!

Heap likee *fan quai*!"

Ah Yut caught him and gave him a good thrashing.

When the smallpox came to Chinatown every

thoughtful parent inoculated his children with it, so that they would have it at the age when there is little danger, but the foreign devils were so fearful of it that they made laws against it, and all Chinese who had it were kept hidden, so that they would not be taken from their homes. Thus it was impossible for all to receive proper care, and though Ah Kee and Ah Sam were scarcely touched with the flowers of heaven, Ah Yut's face was left a livid scar.

"Let no one see the face of the Pow Tai," ordered Quan Quock Ming.

Ah Yut went upon the street no more, and when visitors came she was hidden in a closet.

CHAPTER II

A SACRIFICE TO THE GODS

FONG FAH and Suey Sum were sewing silently and diligently. Ah Yut was moving softly about her duties in the house. Shim Ming was doing her gossiping and marketing. Ah Kee had gone with Ah Sam to the closing entertainment of the school. Suey Sum saw tears falling upon Fong Fah's sewing.

"Are you still grieving for your mother, brothers and sisters in the Middle Kingdom?" asked Suey Sum.

"No; it is not what has been, but what is to be, that disturbs me," replied Fong Fah. "Your daughter and Shim Ming's are young and beautiful, while mine is pock-marked and ugly, and already past the age when a husband should be procured for her."

"But you have your daughter, Fong Fah, and we have none. Though we bore them, they must call you 'mother,' and call us 'sister.' But I have taught Ah Kee to call me 'mother' when no one can hear. You do not care, do you, Fong Fah?"

"Not if it makes you happier, Suey Sum."

The bell rang, and Ah Yut opened the door.

Shim Ming, excited and puffing with the exertion of climbing the stairs, hurried in.

"Aih-yah! But I have heard a piece of news!" she shouted. "One of Loo Yee's slave girls ran away to the *fan quai* mission last night, and it is believed that Lim Doon persuaded her to go. He is surely carrying his coffin on his back, and if he does not hide, the Hop Sing *tong* will see to it that he sleeps on the sidewalk."

"I am glad she ran away," said Suey Sum. "Did she go because she liked Lim Doon?"

"When you were Loo Yee's slave did you get our honorable husband to buy your freedom because you liked him? Or was it because old Woo Ho beat you with a stick? It is said that she grows more severe every day, and the girls she guards are never free from bruises. Loo Yee will have to buy another girl now."

"The one he buys would do well to take opium quickly."

"None should know better than you. Some day he will get a girl with spirit enough to die on his doorstep and bring him bad luck. Have Ah Sam and Ah Kee returned yet?"

"Not yet."

Shim Ming disposed of her groceries and sat down to help Fong Fah and Suey Sum with the sewing.

"It is time our honorable husband was seeking a husband for Ah Kee," she said. "She has now lived fifteen years, and what is the sense of

wasting food and clothing upon one who is to become the daughter of another?"

"It is fortunate that women are few and men are prosperous here," said Suey Sum. "Wedding presents are very large. But Ah Yut is not yet married."

"Hai-e-e! That ugly pock-marked pig! It is useless to think of doing anything for her, except to make her work and thus pay for her food and her clothing."

Fong Fah hung her head and made no reply, but Suey Sum said:

"Ah Yut is a very good girl."

"Yes; she is a good girl," Fong Fah said softly, "even if she is ugly. But Ah Kee is very beautiful, and a very fine husband should be found for her."

"No; you should not expect much of a husband for her," said Shim Ming. "She has not been to the *fan quai* schools, and is lazy and vain. When my girl is old enough to marry she shall have a very smart young man—one who knows everything that the Chinese and the *fan quai* know, and wears *fan quai* clothing, and is very rich and important."

"There are many fine young men who still wear queues and know how to want a wife that does not know too much. A good wife should have no mind of her own either for good or evil."

"Oh, yes; a wife should be like a dove—quiet

and stupid. You two should be very good wives, for you are very stupid."

There was a great clatter on the stairs and Ah Sam and Ah Kee came running in, excited and breathless.

"I won it!" shouted Ah Sam.

"Won what?" asked her mother.

"This medal."

"What is it? A good luck charm?"

"No; it is a scholarship medal for being the best in the school."

"What is the meaning of those characters upon it?"

"William Wood Scholarship Medal. To Elsie D. Quan. 1902."

"What is the meaning of the words, 'Elsie D. Quan?' "

"That is my book name."

"Who ever heard of a girl having a book name? Who gave it to you—the professor?"

"No; I gave it to myself. When I first went to this school and the teacher asked my name, I answered: 'No. 3,' and all the white pupils laughed. So I took a foreign name."

"I have a *fan quai* name, too," said Ah Kee. "Ah Sam gave it to me—didn't you, Elsie?"

"Yes, Gladys."

"Hai-e-e! 'No. 2' isn't fine enough for you," grumbled Shim Ming. "Next the ugly Ah Yut will want a pretty name."

"No; she will always be Ah Yut," said Fong Fah. "Won't you?"

"Yes, mother."

"Go back to your cooking, or everything will be burned," shouted Shim Ming. "Take off those fine clothes, Ah Sam, for your honorable father will soon be home."

Ah Kee was lighthearted and mischievous, and as Ah Sam took off her pretty *fan quai* clothing Ah Kee put the skirt on over her Chinese trousers and placed the big hat on her head. Then she ran into the room where they were sewing.

"I will show you how Ah Sam won the medal," she said.

She made a bow to the women and spoke the foreign words she heard Ah Sam learning, about the wreck of a vessel and the death of the captain's little daughter. She was interrupted by the sound of Quan Quock Ming's footsteps on the stairs, returning to his home after a day of telling fortunes on the street. The girls scampered into the bedroom while Ah Yut was opening the door.

Quan Quock Ming threw his folding table and stool, his big umbrella and his urn of question sticks into a corner of the room, mopped his face with his green silk handkerchief and scowled at the women.

"Hai-e-e! Indolence is wicked and disgusting," he grumbled. "It is almost time for the evening meal and not more than half of your factory sew-

ing is done. How do you expect to earn enough money to buy the food and clothing for the family, to say nothing of the rent? Not a drop of tea ready for me! Three swinish wives and three pigs of daughters! Was ever a man so cursed? The meddlesome *fan quai* officials have stopped all *fan tan* and lottery, and no one comes to have his fortune told! Nothing but flies and old women buzzing on the street corners the whole day—and there is only vexation in both! Has anyone called on business today?"

"No one has called today," replied Shim Ming.

"Is Ah Kee here?"

"Ah Kee is here."

"Someone is coming to see her. Is she well dressed?"

"Yes, she is well dressed."

"Our honorable husband doubtless thinks of finding a husband for Ah Kee," whispered Suey Sum to the other women, "and it is the marriage broker he expects."

Ah Yut brought her father his tea, and as he was supping his third cup noisily the door bell rang.

"See who is at the door, Shim Ming," he ordered, as he seated himself hastily at his table and took up a book.

"It is Loo Yee and a woman," said Shim Ming, after peeping through the spy hole at the door. "I can't see her. Oh, yes; it is old Woo Ho."

Suey Sum dropped her sewing and clutched Fong Fah's arm when the man who had owned

her and the woman who had beaten her were mentioned.

"Admit them," ordered Quan Quock Ming.

They entered three paces and bowed several times toward Quan Quock Ming but he made a pretense of reading for a moment before he looked up and stared at them through his spectacles.

"Have you business with me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir scholar; I will have my fortune told," replied Loo Yee.

Quan Quock Ming took up his urn of question sticks, shook them about and asked Loo Yee to select one. As Quan Quock Ming took it from him he said:

"I know naught of your honorable ancestry; naught of your business affairs; naught of your private life, and naught of your past or your future, but this reveals all to me."

"You always say the same thing, though you know me very well and have told my fortune many times, once no later than yesterday."

Quan Quock Ming made no reply, but scrutinized the characters on the question stick. Woo Ho looked about her, nodded her head toward the women many times and grinned.

"You found a very fine husband, Suey Sum," she said, but none of the women paid any attention to her.

"Your name," said Quan Quock Ming, "is Loo—"

"Never mind that, sir scholar," interrupted Loo Yee. "I know my own name, and the name of my father, and the name of my grandfather. I want to know if I am to have some good fortune."

"Every fortune is good fortune, even though evil may be predicted, for in that case one may offer sacrifices and avert it; and that is good. You are contemplating a business transaction that will bring you profit, though at first it may appear to be a bad bargain."

"That is good, sir scholar, though I would rather not feel that I had made a bad bargain."

"Hai-e-e!" grumbled old Woo Ho. "You came here to transact business, so why not do so at once?"

"Hold your tongue, or you will walk your way quickly," said Quan Quock Ming. "There is much greater good fortune in store for you, Loo Yee. You have a son who will be a great comfort to you all the days that you live; and when you are dead he will inscribe your name upon a tablet and place it upon the family altar, where the oil will never cease to burn, and he will offer sacrifices and worship your memory at your grave."

"All that is very good to hear, sir scholar. Doubtless you, too, have a fine son."

"I have three worthless wives, and each has borne me a pig of a daughter."

"They must be very fine girls, sir scholar, and

will some day be very good daughters to their husband's parents."

"One of them may be considered handsome. Call Ah Kee."

Suey Sum dropped her sewing and seized Fong Fah's hands as Shim Ming went to call Ah Kee, but Fong Fah smiled and patted her reassuringly. Ah Kee came in shyly, but with a smile on her face, and Loo Yee and Woo Ho eyed her long and steadily.

"You have a very fine daughter, Suey Sum," said Woo Ho, "but it is unfortunate that you did not bear your honorable husband a son."

"Is this your thousand of gold?" asked Loo Yee.

"This is the little pig of whom I spoke," replied Quan Quock Ming.

Woo Ho walked over to Ah Kee and felt of her limbs and body, and examined her much as she would a squab in the market.

"Will you take a seat, Loo Yee?" said Quan Quock Ming.

Quan Quock Ming filled his water pipe two or three times and then passed it to Loo Yee, who smoked for a time in silence as he looked at Ah Kee.

"She is very small, sir scholar," said he.

"She is not tall, but she is strong and well developed."

"How many years has she lived?"

"We have fed her for fifteen years."

"Fifteen years!" exclaimed old Woo Ho, and she counted on her fingers. "Yes; that is true. It is sixteen years since you bought her mother from my honorable master for a second wife. Still she appears to be no more than thirteen, and she looks so much like a child that the missionaries may make trouble over her."

"She appears to be ill-tempered and disobedient," said Loo Yee.

"She has a very good disposition, Loo Yee, and you may be sure that I have taught my daughters obedience and the respect that is due their elders."

"What would you consider a suitable present, sir scholar?"

"I could not think of accepting less than \$2500."

"Hai-e-e! That is too much," growled Loo Yee.

Woo Ho clicked her tongue and shook her head.

"I cannot accept less," said Quan Quock Ming.

"I can give you no more than \$1500," declared Loo Yee.

"Aih-yah! Are you insolent, or do you think me a fool?"

"Neither, sir scholar; but I know what a suitable present should be, and what I can afford to give."

"I would not bargain with you, but tell you to walk your way, Loo Yee, were it not that I have

a bad *fung shui*, and the evil spirits bring me nothing but misfortune. I must have money to sacrifice at the temple, but I cannot accept one cent less than \$2250."

Suey Sum began to cry very softly, but Quan Quock Ming scowled at her and Shim Ming shook her as she would a child that was misbehaving.

"I am a business man, sir scholar," said Loo Yee, "and this is a business transaction. If I should give you what you ask I would lose my face as a maker of bargains. Still, appreciating the worthy motive that prompts you, I will give as much as \$1750, but no more. That is all the money I have, and if I gave a higher price I would have to borrow only to be cheated."

"You are a close bargainer, Loo Yee, while I have no mind for business matters, so I will fix my last price. I will abate \$150 if you will add \$350. That will make \$2150."

"It is too much. I cannot give it."

"Then walk your way, Loo Yee."

"Very well, sir scholar," and he went toward the door, followed by Woo Ho, clicking her tongue, shaking her head and muttering at the price.

"One moment, Loo Yee," said Quan Quock Ming. "You have not paid my fee for telling your fortune."

Loo Yee tossed a twenty-five cent piece upon the table and turned again to go. Suey Sum smiled, dried her eyes and picked up her sewing.

"You are an honorable man, Loo Yee," said Quan Quock Ming, "and on second thought I believe that I can abate \$250 if you will add as much to your last price."

Loo Yee hesitated and looked at Ah Kee again for a long time. Woo Ho went to the girl, felt of her again and nodded to her master, saying:

"She will do quite well, though it is a very big price."

"Is that your last price, sir scholar?"

"That is my very last price, Loo Yee."

"Well, I accept it, though I believe I am being cheated," and he laid the money on the table. "Count it to see that it is right and sign this writing of sale."

Suey Sum started up as though to interfere, but Shim Ming pushed her back upon her stool, and Fong Fah put her arm about her and whispered consolingly.

When the money had all been counted and the writing signed Woo Ho took the arm of Ah Kee and started to lead her toward the door, but Ah Sam, who had been listening in the bedroom, ran out and held Ah Kee by the hand, crying out:

"Don't go, Ah Kee! Fight! Scream!"

Quan Quock Ming struck his youngest daughter with the flat of his hand, but so heavily that she sprawled upon the floor till Shim Ming picked her up, shook her, and shoved her out of the room.

"Come!" ordered old Woo Ho, but Ah Kee resisted.

"Go!" commanded Quan Quock Ming.

Ah Kee started to obey, but she saw that her mother was crying, and tearing herself from Woo Ho's grasp she ran and flung her arms around Suey Sum's neck.

"Come at once!" ordered Woo Ho, as she tried to drag Ah Kee away.

"Mother! Mother!" cried Ah Kee. "Where are they taking me?"

"Go!" shouted Quan Quock Ming.

"Obey, daughter," sobbed Suey Sum, as she kissed Ah Kee on the cheek, and Ah Kee went obediently with Loo Yee and Woo Ho.

As the door closed behind them Suey Sum walked unsteadily to the family altar, placed the women's god on the front of it, lighted fresh punks with trembling hands and prostrated herself.

Quan Quock Ming was busy at his camphor-wood chest and did not notice her at once. When his eyes fell upon her praying to the Goddess of Heaven he stared, then roared:

"Suey Sum! Give me my evening meal—at once!"

"Yes, honorable husband."

"Obedience is the greatest virtue," observed Quan Quock Ming, as he smacked his lips over his food.

CHAPTER III

ANOTHER PIG FOR MARKET

"MENTAL tranquillity and physical repose are of equal importance, for they are interdependent, and that which disturbs the one destroys the other," wrote Quan Quock Ming, whose corpulence had so increased with his years that his stomach was big with wisdom. "That will be both a lesson and a warning," he said, as he hung the scroll upon the wall.

At precisely nine o'clock every night he called his daughters, Ah Yut and Ah Sam, and aiming his finger at the writing, said: "Go to bed."

At ten o'clock he laid aside his book, stared long and steadily through his horn-rimmed spectacles at each of his three wives in turn and shook a monitory finger as he announced: "I am about to retire. Be sure to fan me incessantly that my rest may be unbroken."

At the first breath from the sandalwood fans his eyelids quivered and closed, and he grunted with content, complete but for the thought:

"Doubtless the very instant I slumber, these lazy swine steal away to their couches. Tonight I shall catch them neglecting me, and I shall give them such a thrashing as they will never forget.

Then I shall be able to sleep peacefully," and he grunted again with the satisfaction of it.

Afterward he lay quite still, feigning sleep, waiting patiently for the fans to stop, and planning the punishment he should administer to each. He would slap Fong Fah three times, for she always curled up and showed no resentment. He would strike Suey Sum but twice, for at the third blow she always fell on the floor and cried, and Shim Ming he would cuff but once, and that very lightly, for she might scream out the window and disturb the neighborhood. This being settled he breathed deeply and regularly, and after a time snored a little. At intervals he started up suddenly with the feeling that something was wrong, only to find that he had nearly fallen asleep.

The wives of Quan knew as well as the mother of a fretful child when slumber came, and then Fong Fah stretched herself at her honorable husband's feet, Shim Ming dozed in his big cushioned chair, and Suey Sum stole away to the kitchen to take up her factory sewing. If he woke to call for tea or tobacco, it was only after much stretching, yawning and grunting, and he always found them at his side ready to attend him. When he slept again the house of Quan was as still as the Tien How Temple at midnight, except for the snoring of the sage, the smothered sobs of Ah Sam grieving for Ah Kee, and the whispered consolation of Ah Yut, who was always a little mother to her younger sister.

"Our father had no right to sell our sister as a slave," cried Ah Sam, "and I shall yet help her to run away to the mission."

"It does not seem right, younger sister," said Ah Yut, "but disobedience would be more wicked still."

"You do not understand, Ah Yut. Our father is Chinese and follows the laws and the customs of his people, but we are Americans, and should obey their law. He had no right to sell her, and Loo Yee has no right to keep her. This is America—not the Middle Kingdom."

"No, I cannot understand that, Ah Sam. You have attended the *fan quai* schools and have become a *fan quai* girl, while I am ignorant and still Chinese. But we shall always be sisters, shall we not?"

Then they put their arms about each other and cried themselves to sleep.

No one in the household ever saw Suey Sum close her eyes. When she was not attending to her honorable husband she was sewing by the dim light of an oil lamp, half-blinded with tears.

"Why do you not rest?" Fong Fah often asked.

"I cannot rest for thinking of Ah Kee—my little girl—the slave of him who once owned and beat me," she always answered.

"Your day's sewing is done, and you will surely blind yourself or become ill if you work the whole night."

"But I earn a little more money than our honorable husband knows nothing of. Then I buy a lottery ticket and pray to the Mother of Heaven to win, so that I may buy Ah Kee's freedom. But I always lose."

"I am glad that my daughter has an ugly pock-marked face, for no one will ever buy her for a slave or take her for a wife, and I shall always have Ah Yut with me."

Quan Quock Ming had finished his midday meal and had gone back to his stool and table on the sidewalk to tell fortunes. Ah Sam was eating cakes from one hand and doing sums in mathematics with the other, when her mother, Shim Ming, said to her:

"You will not go to school this afternoon."

"Why not?" asked Ah Sam, petulantly, for she had become too much of a *fan quai* girl to be respectful or obedient.

"Because you are wanted at home. Take off your *fan quai* clothing and dress yourself in holiday attire after the Chinese fashion."

"I would like to know how I shall ever finish at the high school if I am to be kept at home."

"Do as you are told. It is your honorable father's orders. If anyone calls, you are to pretend that you are Ah Yut."

Ah Sam obeyed with no more questions, though she did not understand the matter at all; but while the women were unbraiding her two queues, smoothing her hair and fastening it with orna-

ments, she thought much, and muttered in the foreign tongue so they could not understand:

"If he tries to sell me to any dirty slave dealer I shall yell for the police."

But it was no slave dealer who called that day. It was Wong Yee Shi the marriage broker.

Wong Yee Shi drank the tea of the chrysanthemum bloom, ate preserved fruits and gossiped with the wives of Quan, speaking of all matters except marriage. She saw nothing of the ugly Ah Yut, but much of the beautiful Ah Sam, noting carefully her face, her form and her manners, and she listened eagerly when Shim Ming spoke of the gentleness and sweetness of Ah Yut.

Quan Quock Ming seemed greatly surprised and none too well pleased when he returned and found Wong Yee Shi at his home.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"To inquire after your health, sir scholar."

"Aih-yah! It is very bad. I get no sleep whatever for the fear that my rest may be broken. I must lie awake all night to see that those lazy women fan me while I sleep."

"Ts! ts! ts!" and Wong Yee Shi shook her head sympathetically.

"Kung-foo-tsze says truly: 'No man can watch three wives with two eyes.'"

"I have heard it said, sir scholar, that a foreign devil cannot watch one wife with two eyes."

"But what can one do about it?"

"Louie Juck Sam is also troubled with sleepless-

ness, and I am told that he intends buying some of the foreign devils' glass eyes to keep watch while he sleeps."

"Who is this person Louie Juck Sam?"

"He is a merchant and very prosperous. That reminds me, sir scholar, that he has asked me to find him a daughter, and I have seen your thousand of gold. Will you be good enough to tell me her name?"

"Her name is Ah Yut."

"It is possible that Louie Juck Sam may consider Ah Yut a suitable wife for his son. If you will consider the matter, be good enough to tell me the moment of her birth."

"Would Louie Juck Sam's son be a suitable husband for Ah Yut?"

"Louie Lim is a very handsome young man. Perhaps you have never seen him, for he has only recently come from the Middle Kingdom, and is so full of filial piety that he never goes from his father's house!"

Wong Yee Shi was so eager to earn her fee that she did not tell Quan Quock Ming Louie Lim had been blind from birth, and Quan Quock Ming was so anxious to make a good bargain that he pretended not to know it.

"Doubtless it is as you say, Wong Yee Shi, but my little pig is a very good housekeeper, and I am such a foolish old man that I do not like to see her leave my home to become the daughter of another. Then I doubt if Louie Juck Sam would

make so large a present as I should demand. However, you may negotiate," and Quan Quock Ming wrote: "Ah Yut, born 5th year Kwang Hsui, 3rd month, 18th day—"

"Aih-yah!" exclaimed Wong Yee Shi. "Is she so old? Why, one would say that she had not lived more than fifteen years."

"That is Ah Yut's exact age."

Wong Yee Shi went her way, marveling that one who appeared so young could have lived twenty years, but she returned the next day to say to Quan:

"The astrologer finds, sir scholar, that the births of Louie Lim and Ah Yut agree, and that good luck would come from their marriage, so I have come with the offer. What would you consider a suitable present from Louie Juck Sam?"

"I know that he is wealthy and has an honorable ancestry," said Quan Quock Ming. "While I am poor and my family is very mean and low. Still I could not consider anything less than \$1,000."

"Hai-i-ie!" exclaimed Wong Yee Shi. "That is surely too much, sir scholar. No one ever gives more than half of that, and Louie Juck Sam will never pay it."

Wong Yee Shi shook her head, clicked her tongue and looked very cross about it, for she feared that she would not be able to arrange the matter, and would lose a fine fee.

"Then walk your way slowly, Wong Yee Shi,"

said Quan Quock Ming firmly. "That is my last price, and Louie Juck Sam can pay it or not as he chooses, for I shall not reduce it. However, you are a good woman, and you have found such a handsome young man that I will add \$50 to your fee, if you can arrange the matter."

"It is all arranged," said Wong Yee Shi to Louie Juck Sam. "It is only necessary for you to agree upon the present that you will offer Quan Quock Ming for his daughter, Ah Yut."

Louie Juck Sam smiled and rubbed his hands together as he said: "You are a good broker, Wong Yee Shi. What present does Quan Quock Ming demand?"

"It is quite large, but the girl will make a very fine daughter."

"You must be a bad bargainer, Wong Yee Shi. How much is it?"

"It is not easy to bargain with Quan Quock Ming, for he is a wise old man and very obstinate."

"How much does he ask?"

"Remember that it is very difficult to find a wife for Louie Lim, and I doubt if Quan Quock Ming would bargain at all if he knew your son is blind."

"Tell me, Wong Yee Shi, what he demands."

"It does seem too much, but—"

"Cease your chatter and tell me at once."

"He demands a thousand dollars."

"Haie-i-ie!" roared Louie Juck Sam. "He is a

fraud and you are a fool! Go away!" and Louie Juck Sam cursed the mother of Quan Quock Ming, the mother of Wong Yee Shi, and the mother of his own son.

"But you must find a wife for Louie Lim, or he will never have a son to preserve your memory and worship his ancestors," argued Wong Yee Shi.

"Must I bankrupt myself and lose my face as a maker of bargains because Quan Quock Ming is avaricious and you are a fool?" and Louie Juck Sam cursed the moment of his birth. "Look elsewhere for a wife for my son, Wong Yee Shi."

"There is no place to go. I have already been in every home where there is a marriageable daughter, and none will negotiate. Quan Quock Ming is the only one who will fix a price."

"A thousand dollars for a woman who has wasted twenty years! Hai-i-ie!" and Louie Juck Sam cursed heaven and earth and the gods.

"But she appears much younger and is very beautiful," said Wong Yee Shi. "Besides, she is respectful and obedient and is a very fine housekeeper."

Louie Juck Sam walked to and fro, shaking his head and cursing everything that he had not mentioned before, but finally he said: "Go to Quan Quock Ming and offer \$750."

"He will not accept it. He has fixed his last price."

"He must know that Louie Lim is blind. Did you tell him?"

"Aih-yah! Do you think I am such a fool?"

"Yes. Now I suppose I shall have to give what he asks—but I shall not be able to pay you a fee."

"Hai-i-ie! Why do you suppose I have gone from house to house for the last two months?"

"To get your mouth full of gossip and your belly full of tea and cakes."

"If you will not pay me my fee I shall go at once and tell Quan Quock Ming that Louie Lim is blind," and Wong Yee Shi started away.

"Wait a minute, Wong Yè Shi," said Louie Juck Sam quickly. "I will pay it, though I know I am being cheated."

The letters of three generations, naming the parents, the grandparents and the great-grandparents of Louie Lim and Ah Yut were exchanged, and then the daughter of Quan Quock Ming and the son of Louie Juck Sam were told that they were to be married.

Ah Yut retired to the seclusion of the inner apartment to make her wedding garments, and though it was her duty to cry for three days only before her wedding to show she was sorry to leave her parents, she was so blinded with tears from the moment she was told of the matter that she could scarcely see her sewing.

"Louie Lim believes I am young and beautiful, while I am old and ugly," she cried.

"But you will make a fine wife for him," said Ah Sam, as she put her arms around her sister and kissed her on the cheek, "and you will be a good daughter to Louie Juck Sam."

"No, no; they will not wait to find that out, but they will beat me as soon as they see how they have been cheated. They will drive me to work with a stick, and Louie Lim will take a second wife, who will laugh at me. It is only reasonable that he should do so, for no man so young, so handsome and so wealthy wants an ugly wife when he can just as well get a pretty one."

"That is what comes from being a Chinese girl. I would not marry any man that I did not know and love."

"What else can a girl do, when it is improper even to notice a man and immoral to speak to one?"

"I would run away to the mission."

"No, Ah Sam. One must obey one's parents. It would be very wicked to do otherwise."

"That is the reason girls in the Middle Kingdom form societies and take a pledge to hang or to drown themselves before they can be delivered to a husband."

"One can do that as well afterward."

CHAPTER IV

THE TOAD IN THE BURROW OF THE MOLE

WHEN Louie Lim was told of the beautiful young wife that had been selected for him he said not a word, but hour after hour he sat thinking.

"I am my father's only son, and I must take a wife in order that I may have a son. Still, Ah Yut believes I am as handsome as the marriage broker described me, and when she finds I am blind she will surely drown herself, as did the girl who married the lame Chin, or hang herself, as did the one who married the cross-eyed Chew. If she does neither she will neglect my father's house and smile on other men, while I am sitting alone in darkness."

But all the tears of Ah Yut and all the sighs of Louie Lim could not interfere with the covenants and ceremonials. The betrothal money was paid, and the tea presents—cakes, betel-nuts and a goose—were sent to the family of Quan, who in turn sent the small presents—bedding and cooking utensils—to the house of Louie.

The lucky day had been selected by the astrologer, and all who had made presents to Louie Lim were assembled at his father's home

to await the delivery of Ah Yut. They hid his wedding robes, and after he had redeemed them with small presents he clothed himself and worshiped at the family altar. Children disputed over the candies, nuts, oranges and copper cash—the symbols of fruitfulness and wealth—that they had stolen from the wedding bed, while old women cooked chickens, rice and red eggs, for guests must feast at weddings, and red eggs bring good luck and many sons.

Ah Yut had no girl friends to gather at her home, tear off her clothing, tie her hands and feet and lock her in a room to keep her from leaving them and going to her husband, but Ah Sam alone did all she could. And Ah Yut, with tears in her eyes, resisted gently until, with the help of Ah Sam's mother, she escaped to her room and locked herself in. Then Shim Ming dressed her in the plain white garments of mourning, wrapped the red cloth around her head to show she was the first wife, and took her to the carriage that waited at the door, for there are no red sedan chairs here. Neither was there a procession, for there were no musicians or friends of the family to walk before, and no younger brother to ride behind.

When Shim Ming climbed the stairs of Louie Juck Sam's home to make her offerings of betelnut and beg Louie Lim to receive his wife, Ah Yut crouched in the corner of the carriage, pressed the red cloth to her face and trembled with fear. She

wept and waited, it seemed hours and hours, for Louie Lim's friends had locked him in a room and held him for ransom. One demanded a box of opium, another a silk jacket and a third a box of cigars, all of which Shim Ming agreed to pay, but they refused to accept her promises unless someone guaranteed them. She bowed to each guest, offering betel-nut, and begging that the presents be guaranteed, but none would do it until the demands had been reduced to a little opium, a silk handkerchief and a box of tobacco. Then Shim Ming was permitted to kneel at the feet of Louie Lim and say to him:

"Your bride is waiting in humility at your door and begs that you receive her."

With a heavy heart, lagging feet and groping hands Louie Lim made his way to the carriage in which Ah Yut still waited and wept, and tapped the door of it with his fan to signify his consent.

Ah Yut was like one rising from a long sickness when Shim Ming took her upon her back to carry her from the carriage to the inner apartment.

"What worse luck can come if my feet do touch the floor?" she cried, and forgot to pray as she passed over the charcoal fire that purified her and through the shower of firecrackers that drove away the evil spirits.

She slipped from Shim Ming's back and lay in a heap at Louie Lim's feet, while he stood upon a stool to show his superiority. She dared not raise her eyes even to the soles of his slippers, and

the old women frowned, shook their heads and muttered:

"Ts! ts! ts! She shows too much humility. She should only kneel."

Shim Ming helped her to her feet and took the red cloth from her head, but Ah Yut held her face so low that none could see it, even while she and Louie Lim knelt at the family altar and worshiped the ancestral tablets, the gods of the principal doors of the house and the parents of Ah Yut. Nor did she raise her eyes to see the orange-tree and the good wishes for a hundred sons and a thousand grandsons, nor when she knelt before Louie Lim to give with trembling hands the two cups of wine. And when they took seats side by side both seemed to forget the most important thing at a wedding, or not to care which should have the upper hand in ruling the household, for neither tried to sit upon a piece of the other's garments.

Ah Yut buried her chin in her blouse and clung to her chair to keep from falling, while Louie Lim sat very straight with clenched teeth and twitching fingers, both waiting for the guests to make the usual jokes.

"Tell her she is very beautiful, Louie Lim!" shouted one.

"You are very beautiful, Ah Yut," muttered Louie Lim, and all laughed, for it was like one speaking in his sleep.

"Tell him he is very handsome, Ah Yut!" but

she could not find her tongue to speak the words, and Louie Lim thought she had already discovered that he was blind.

"Tell her you will beat her, Louie Lim!" shouted another.

"I shall beat you, Ah Yut," he said, and his voice was stern, for his heart was heavy; and when everyone laughed Ah Yut shivered and sobbed.

"Tell him you will smile on other men when he is not at home, Ah Yut!"

"I will smile—" muttered Ah Yut.

"Louder! Louder!" the people shouted, but she could not say another word.

"Tell her she is a pock-marked toad, Louie Lim!" and all laughed and clapped their hands at so good a joke on her.

"You are a pock-marked toad, Ah Yut," said Louie Lim, slowly and clearly, as one who would speak the truth.

The waters of sorrow rushed to Ah Yut's eyes and overflowed her cheeks, and when they fell upon the hand of Louie Lim he touched her face lightly with his finger-tips.

"Tell him that it makes no difference to a blind man, Ah Yut!"

Then for the first time Ah Yut looked into the face of Louie Lim, and she saw that he was really blind. She fell at his feet, clasped them in her hands and kissed them.

"My dear husband is blind," she cried, "and he can never see my ugly face!"

Louie Lim sprang to his feet and lifting Ah Yut put his two arms about her, saying softly and gently:

"I can see nothing but your loving heart, Ah Yut!"

"You deceived me, Wong Yee Shi," said Quan Quock Ming. "You did not tell me that Louie Lim was blind."

"You did not tell me that Ah Yut was pock-marked, sir scholar."

"I shall not pay your fee, Wong Yee Shi."

"Aih-yah! But I found a good husband for her, sir scholar."

"What is it to me if the toad finds a home in the burrow of the mole?"

CHAPTER V

THE RUNAWAY PIG

IT is probable that Ah Sam would have been very beautiful had she attired herself with taste, and doubtless she would have appeared quite desirable had she conducted herself with propriety. After she had attended the foreign devils' school, however, she would never let her body be bandaged, as all modest girls should in order to have a fine flat chest, but she even wore the jacket of whalebone to make her waist smaller and her grossness more apparent. Instead of remaining in her home and concealing herself from the sight of men she boldly went on the streets alone. That would not have been considered so indecorous if she had walked softly with mincing steps and had carried her head low and her eyes cast down with becoming humility; but she held her chin high, looked at, over or through everyone and everything and clicked the very high heels of her very low shoes as though to call attention to the slender ankles and plump calves so impudently exposed. And every defiant toss of her feathered bonnet and every confident swing of her squared shoulders seemed to say:

"Well—look at me! What have you to say?"

Much was said and none of it whispers.

"Hai-ie! The fortune-teller found a daw among his doves!" laughed the elder people.

"She is worth no more than a poisoned pig!" declared the slave dealers.

"One might as well take a plague into his home!" said the merchants with marriageable sons.

"Some chicken!" shouted the small boys who understood the idioms of the foreign tongue.

But there were others, born and educated here—those who cut off their queues, wore foreign attire and called themselves Native Sons—who so far demeaned themselves as to lift their hats, speak to Ah Sam as an equal and stroll along the street at her side. With them she laughed and chatted as shamelessly as a slave girl trying to wheedle a bracelet from a gambler. But at such times she was careful to avoid the corner where her father told fortunes.

Though all agreed that she was a very immoral girl, a disgrace to her family and a reproach to her people, I, who had known her from infancy, had amused her in childhood and had liked her always, knew she had been corrupted by the pernicious foreign doctrine that women should live as they wish—not as they are ordered.

It was after she had finished at the high school that she was often seen in many different places—sometimes in a public park, sometimes at a foreign restaurant or theater—but always with a

student from the university across the bay, who called himself Robert E. Lee. And always he was whispering to her of things that only their elders should mention—things that no scrupulous man should utter and no decent girl should hear—about love and marriage—marriage by a foreign priest without a present to her father! And Ah Sam not only lent an eager ear, but degraded herself by discussing the matter.

"I care nothing for my father but much for my freedom," she told him, "and I fear you do not really love me. Beneath your foreign clothing and culture you are still only Chinese."

To this he protested vehemently that he had become altogether foreign, even as she; that he believed in the one God and the one wife, and that they two would always be as one heart and one soul. At last she believed and waited for him to kiss her on the lips, but perhaps that was one foreign custom he had not learned, for he did not.

They were standing at a corner near her home fixing the hour and place of their meeting the following day to be secretly married, when she received a blow on the side of the head that sent her rolling into the gutter. While she still lay there half stunned she heard shouts of laughter and then her father's voice bellowing:

"Get up, you filthy pig!"

When Ah Sam picked herself up and looked about her Quan Quock Ming was cursing and waving his arms, and far down the street, where

shop-keepers stood at their doors laughing and shouting, Robert E. Lee was running like a frightened rabbit, while small boys pelted him with bad vegetables. Her father would have beaten her where all might see, but Ah Sam sounded the whistle she wore on a chain at her throat, and a *fan quai* policeman came.

"Take me to the Mission," she said, and as he walked up the street with her the people shook their heads and shouted:

"Quan Quock Ming put a gold collar on his puppy, and now it follows only foreign devils!"

"See what comes of your folly!" said Quan Quock Ming to Ah Sam's mother. "I have lost my face and a valuable daughter. Get her back, Shim Ming, or I will surely put you out the door and lock it behind you."

When a secondary wife is permitted to grumble a great deal she is contented, and when she is growing old and fat she fears nothing more than divorce, for the instant her husband's door closes behind her all other doors slam in her face. So Shim Ming puffed up the hill toward the foreign Mission, wasting so much breath in cursing unfilial daughters and unreasonable husbands that she had to pause often for more.

"I have come to take you home," she said as soon as Ah Sam had finished kissing her.

"This is now my home," replied Ah Sam.

"Unless you return with me your honorable father will surely put me out in the street, and I

shall starve," declared Shim Ming. "He has said it."

Though Ah Sam loved her mother and shed many tears with her she shook her head against all persuasions, pleas and promises, saying again and again: "No, mother; I intend to remain here."

"Hai-ie! Then I shall give you the beating you deserve," and Shim Ming would have done it if the woman at the Mission had not shoved her out the door.

"Aih-yah! Aih-yah!" screamed Shim Ming all the way to her home, and at every window and door that opened she stopped to wave her arms, shed more tears and cry out: "The female foreign devil first stole my daughter and then gave me a beating!"

By the time she had reached her home a crowd was following at her heels, and she felt assured that her honorable husband would not dare deal harshly with one whose great suffering had already stirred the interest and sympathy of the public.

That night Quan Quock Ming talked long and loudly before the assembled clan of Quan, saying:

"Why should I fatten a pig for the foreign devils?"

But his kinsmen only shook their heads and answered: "Why indeed? But nothing can be done about it."

When he complained to the Suey Sing *tong* the fighting men said:

"If you will offer a suitable reward we will kill Robert E. Lee, or any other Chinese who may have meddled in the matter, but we cannot fight foreign devil women."

So Quan Quock Ming was still eating a dumb man's loss and suffering of it when Loo Yee, the slave dealer, stopped at his table on the street corner.

"Your pig has been rooting in my garden, sir scholar," he said.

"Hai-ie! Since I sold her to you she has been your pig, Loo Yee. Do what you please with her."

"I am speaking of *your* pig—the one that ran away and found a new sty."

"What has she been doing?"

"She came last night with an official and the female foreign devil from the Mission and took Ah Kee away."

"I am not the keeper of your slaves."

"But you are the regulator of your own family. Fetch back my pig or pay the loss occasioned by yours."

"I have neither the money nor the power; and if I had I would not waste the one or exert the other. Go away!"

"Then I shall pour water on the grindstone while the Bing Kung hatchet men sharpen their cleavers."

"A grindstone would be a fine target for the gunmen of the Suey Sing *tong*."

Quan Quock Ming and Loo Yee looked long enough into each other's eyes to see that there was no misunderstanding and then hurried away to attend to the business in hand. But peacetalkers from the Tin Yee *tong* intervened and brought them together again, saying:

"It is true, Loo Yee, that you have suffered a loss, but it is also true that Quan Quock Ming should not be held wholly responsible. He should do what he can to repair it, and with that you should be satisfied."

"I have no money," said Quan Quock Ming, "and you know that runaway slaves cannot be returned. Perhaps Loo Yee will accept in exchange the one that caused the damage. I may be able to catch her again."

Loo Yee seldom smiled, but he did then, and it was not pleasant to see.

"I will accept her if Quan will deliver her," he said, "even though I am able to keep her for only a single night. It will be worth the money just to see the little foreign devil fight and hear her scream."

"I will deliver her," promised Quan Quock Ming.

CHAPTER VI

A LABORER IN THE VINEYARD

FROM the windows of the Mission Ah Sam and Ah Kee often saw men of the clan of Quan with their hands in their pockets loitering on nearby street corners or lounging in nearby doorways; and sometimes they saw faces peering at them from windows across the street. Ah Sam knew their business but had no fear of them in the day time and never went out at night time unless accompanied by the keeper of the Mission, while Ah Kee went out not at all. Many traps and snares were laid for Ah Sam, but she was too wary to walk into them.

Loo Yee was grumbling, the fighting men were growing impatient and the *fan quai* police were trying to discover why the business men of Chinatown wore anxious faces when they hurried and whispered.

"You must help me," said Quan Quock Ming to me. "You are the only person she will trust."

He was very angry when I refused to meddle in the matter and talked so much and so loudly to the merchants that all said to me:

"You can prevent a war and will not do it? Very well! We shall see about it!"

Then I hurried to Quan Quock Ming and promised to do whatever he might advise. Under his instructions I procured a room in a house across the street from the Mission and rearranged it, not forgetting curtains for the bed to keep out draughts, an altar for the Mother of Heaven to keep out evil spirits and a yard of carpet for the floor to keep out splinters when one should worship. Then Shim Ming went to the Mission weeping and complaining to Ah Sam:

"Your honorable father put me out on the street because you ran away, and my own kinsmen closed their doors in my face. I would have had no place to lay my head if Fung, the Perfect, had not provided me a room over there. But who will supply me with food? Aih-yah! I shall surely starve!"

"I will send food to you," said the Mission woman.

"But who will prepare it for me? The evil spirits have put needle-pains in my legs and often I cannot stand on my feet."

"I will prepare your meals, bathe your feet and brush your hair, mother," said Ah Sim, kissing and consoling her.

"I will first see the room," declared the woman.

She went with Shim Ming and inspected the halls, examined the windows and even peeped behind the curtains of the bed to satisfy herself that there was no way for a person to leave the room except by the front door or the fire ladders in

sight of the Mission. And every morning Ah Sam went across the street to perform her filial duties.

It was this very morning that Shim Ming was on her knees before the altar touching her forehead to the floor and calling:

"A-a-a-a! Mother of Heaven! A-a-a-a! Mother of Heaven! Hear me! Help me! Help me to recover my unfilial daughter, who has abandoned her good mother to follow after wicked foreign devils! A-a-a-a! Mother of——a thousand devils! My rice is burning!"

She scrambled to her feet and snatched it from the stove, and I stepped out from behind the curtains of her bed.

"Aih-yah!! How did you get in here?"

"The same way Ah Sam will go out."

"But I was gone from the room only long enough to get water and never out of sight of the door."

"Will she surely come this morning?"

"She will surely come."

"Then we shall surely get her."

"She is very suspicious and watchful. If I but turn my hand this way or that her hand flies to the whistle at her neck."

"Then do not turn your hand."

"And the female foreign devil is on watch across the street from the moment Ah Sam comes until she goes again."

"To-day she may see her enter, but she will not

see her go—unless she can see through brick walls and—underground.”

“Those Christian foreign devils are very clever.”

“Your honorable husband has always been cleverer than they, and I have become a very good Christian, so together there should be no difficulty about the matter. I have brought you a hammer and some tacks.”

“What am I to do with them?”

“Conceal the way of her going—when she is gone. This room will be searched.”

“What am I to do when she comes?”

“Nothing whatever—except to keep what little sense you have. Be neither kinder nor harsher than usual. I will return—and get her.”

“What am I to say to you?”

“Only what you would say to one who has been your benefactor.”

“I cannot see how it is to be done,” she said, shaking her head.

“You will see when the time comes—not before—for your eyes tell all that your tongue withholds—which is little.”

Then I went down the stairs to wait and to listen. I heard Ah Sam come and knock at the door, and I heard Shim Ming grumbling as she opened it.

“Hai-i-ie! Why do you always come just at a time to make trouble for me? The very instant

I get seated to a bowl of rice I have to get up and open the door for you."

"I always come at the same hour, mother," replied Ah Sam gently.

"Hear her! Always comes at the same hour! If you were a filial daughter you would be here always to attend me, instead of following after wicked foreign devils and their invisible God. Hai-ie! Parents ought to know but one trouble—that of their own illness—yet you leave me helpless in my old age to starve."

"No, mother dear; you shall never starve. See the nice piece of pork and the vegetable I have brought you for your evening meal—and some salt fish for your breakfast. I am learning to do fine needle-work at the Mission, and all the money I earn I will give to you."

"But I have to wait for you to comb my hair and bathe my feet."

"I would stay with you always, mother, if I could."

"Aih-yah! Stay with me always! Then we both would starve. Who fed you till you were old enough to be useful? Who clothed you till you were large enough to be valuable? Then you ran away to the Mission, you ungrateful pig! And some day, no doubt, you will let the female foreign devil sell you for a wife or a slave, and she, instead of your honorable father, will get the profit."

"No, mother; the girls there are not sold."

"Not sold? Hai-ie! First stolen from their parents and then given away! What wickedness! What are girls for but to become wives or slaves, as their parents shall decide? You would bring at least \$3,000 as a slave——"

"No, mother; I will not let myself be sold."

"Then why not let your kinsmen select a husband for you? We can get a wedding present of at least \$500. That is very little, but it is better than nothing."

"You might better drive the nails in the lid of my coffin than sell me either for a wife or a slave."

"Hai-ie!" and I heard the slap that Shim Ming gave her.

When Shim Ming opened the door in answer to my knock, Ah Sam was near the open window with her whistle in her hand. I bowed with clasped hands and greeted her:

"Peace be with you!"

She smiled and came toward me. "Are you, too, a Christian?" she asked in surprise.

"I have seen the light," I answered.

"One can see many lights in this country," laughed Shim Ming.

"There is but one true light," I replied.

"Aih-yah! I am a poor old woman and can use nothing but oil—and a very little of that. But for your benevolent liver I would be wandering in darkness."

"I am only a poor laborer in the Master's

vineyard, but the light shines for all," I told her.

"Hai-ie! I always thought you were a rich gambler instead of a poor laborer."

"I am glad—very glad," said Ah Sam, who had been listening to all I said, "that you, too, are a believer in the one great God. I wondered why you had helped my mother."

"Can I help you, Ah Sam?"

"Only by praying for me."

"I have prayed for you, Ah Sam, and I will pray for you every morning and every night—if you will teach me the prayer to the Father of Heaven." I went toward the altar.

"Not there," said Ah Sam.

I turned the face of the Mother of Heaven to the wall, took a large cross from beneath my blouse and placed it upright against the back of the figure. Ah Sam smiled and knelt beside me.

"Our father——" said Ah Sam.

"Our Father," I repeated after her.

"Who art in heaven——"

"Who art in heaven——"

"Hallowed be thy name——"

"Hallowed be thy name——"

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done——"

I threw one arm around Ah Sam, covering her mouth with my hand and touched a spring with my other hand, and we went through the floor together. As we slid down the long chute into the cellar I heard Shim Ming cry:

"Aih-yah!"

Looking up I saw the trap door closing and Shim Ming peering down, and when she hammered the tacks into the carpet it sounded like one driving nails in a coffin.

"Oh, my God! Help me!" cried Ah Sam.

"Help yourself," and I laughed at her.

When she had scratched my face sufficiently I took her in my arms and held her so she could no longer move.

"Your one great God can do nothing," I told her, "but your one little friend can do much. If you should go through that door to the right you would find Loo Yee waiting for you at the other end of the passage. If you should go through that door to the left you would find no one expecting you in the store adjoining the Mission. Now choose your way," and I set her on her feet.

"He has softened your heart," she said.

"No, you scratched my face to soften the heart of your honorable father toward me. Go quickly—and trust no one again!"

Ah Sam ran and I after her, so swiftly that I would surely have caught her if I had not stumbled and fallen twice in the store across the street.

Quan Quock Ming listened in silence while I told him all—or nearly all—that had happened, but he never took his eyes from my face, which he could see was scratched and bleeding. He looked at me a long time, and when he spoke I was greatly surprised and not a little relieved that he showed no anger—not even disappointment.

"You are growing so weak, Fung Ching," he said very quietly, "that I fear you will not live long."

"Yes, sir scholar," I replied, "I feel that I am carrying my coffin on my back," and I coughed like one dying of lung trouble.

Though that was only this morning I feel so much better now that I am encouraged to believe that I may still live to see the realization of my old friend's worst fear—that he will die like a chicken. It is only a step from the Land of the Living to the Kingdom of the Dead—if so much—and——Ah-h-ma!

I had seen no hand, I had heard no footfall; but as Little Pete plunged forward to the balcony floor a knife fell clattering at my feet, and the door behind me slammed and locked. Flung upon its frosted glass for just an instant was the shadow of a man, gigantic and grotesque.

BOOK V

LITTLE CHICKEN

CHAPTER I

THE HOME OF THE TWO CRIPPLED SONS

WHEN Chan Gow Doy, with the tan of a Kwang Si summer still fresh on his face and the mud of a Comstock mine still damp on his boots, broke the fan-tan bank in Virginia City, his countrymen looked at him askance, shook their heads, clicked their tongues and muttered:

"Suey quai!" (Lucky devil).

He stuffed his winnings into his pockets, turned his back stolidly upon the numerous cousins who clamored for a feast, packed his few belongings into an oil-cloth bag and departed for San Francisco. A small part of his capital bought a young wife, for every man must have a son; a larger portion fitted up a gambling-house and provided the bank-roll to operate it, and the remainder went for sacrifices at the Tien How Temple, where Chan Gow Doy prayed long and fervently for much money and many children. Within a year he had doubled his capital, and his wife had borne him a daughter. Within a decade it

required six figures to total his wealth and six fingers to count his daughters.

"Lucky devil!" muttered his competitors who saw his fortune growing with never a break.

"Poor devil!" mused his countrymen who saw his family increasing with never a son.

But Chan Gow Doy took what came to him with no sign of elation and no word of complaint, holding himself aloof from those who looked at him askance.

"Three healthy daughters are worth no more than one crippled son," say the classics, so his abode was always referred to as "the Home of the Two Crippled Sons."

One cannot be too guarded in speaking of aught that concerns evil spirits, so his gambling-house became known as "the House of Beautiful Angels."

Chan Gow Dow stood at the door of the Ho Yin Doong smoking his pipe and meditating, as he had every morning for years—meditating upon the caprices of demoniacal spirits that brought him wealth and denied him sons. His desire had become a yearning, his yearning an obsession; and over and over again he had said to himself:

"I would give all I possess if that stupid woman would only bear me a male child, no matter how dullwitted or misshapen."

As usual his meditations ended when his eyes fell upon Quan Quock Ming, the fortune teller, squatting on his stool across the street. For ten

years he had watched the necromancer dozing on the corner, rousing himself only long enough to advise some credulous gambler that the god of chance was perhaps propitious. For ten years he had seen the gamblers hasten across the street and lose their money at his tables, so he regarded Quan with good-natured tolerance and contempt.

For ten years Quan Quock Ming had sat at his table pretending to slumber, but covertly watching Chan Gow Doy, each day formulating new plans to share in the profits of the gambling-house and as quickly abandoning them as impracticable; but always awaiting with confidence the coming of the rich gambler and the great opportunity. Not so much as a nod—not even a New Year greeting had ever passed between them, for Chan Gow Doy had no need of fortune-tellers, and Quan Quock Ming never played at fan-tan.

While Quan watched the gambler from beneath half-closed lids he cast frequent glances up the street toward the Home of the Two Crippled Sons. When at last he saw a window raised and a white cloth waved he sprang from his stool and stood erect with both hands raised high above his head.

Chan Gow Doy started and stared in amazement, wondering if the fortune-teller had suffered a sudden seizure. Quan stood quite still an instant, then strode deliberately across the street, stopped before the gambler and bowed with clasped hands.

"Younger brother," he said gravely, "I am the bearer of bad news. Evil spirits still pursue you, and another daughter is about to be born to you."

"Hai-i-ie!" roared Chan Gow Doy. He flung his pipe upon the sidewalk and raised a clenched fist angrily. "Who asked you to meddle with my affairs?"

"I never meddle, younger brother," replied Quan softly. "I give information."

"Hai-ie! You merely guess when the chances are equal and you take no risk."

"I never guess, younger brother. I *know*."

"Go away!" ordered Chan impatiently.

Quan bowed and turned to go. Again he flung his hands high above his head and stood in the attitude of one listening intently. As he lowered his hands he turned and bowed again to Chan Gow Doy.

"Younger brother," he said solemnly, "another daughter has just been born to you."

Then he turned and walked slowly back to his stool, while Chan hurried to the telephone within. The midwife answered his impatient call.

"Yes; it is another daughter," she said, "born this instant."

Chan flung the receiver from him with an oath and strode across to Quan's stand.

"How did you know that?" he demanded.

Quan Quock Ming squinted at him through his horn-rimmed spectacles for a full half minute before he answered:

"Just as I know the next one will be a son, younger brother, if—if——" He paused and pondered.

"If what?" asked Chan Gow Doy eagerly.

"If you are wise enough to listen to wisdom—and will act promptly."

"Tell me what to do, sir scholar." He laid a gold piece upon the table.

"Hurry to your home and see to it that the news goes forth that a son has been born to you. Then return to me."

Within an hour women were crying to one another from open windows and men were calling to one another from shop doors:

"Chan Gow has a son!"

"*Suey quai!*"

CHAPTER II

LITTLE CHICKEN

WHEN Quan Quock Ming saw Chan Gow Doy emerge from his home and hurry down the street he seized "The Necromancer's Staff and Lantern" and buried himself in its pages. When he calculated that he had kept Chan Gow Doy standing before his table exactly long enough he glanced up at him over his spectacles.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I want to know what is to be done, sir scholar?" He laid another gold-piece upon the table.

"Concerning the matter of the boy girl?"

"Yes, sir scholar."

Quan laid aside the book and pocketed the coin with a pretense of indifference. He picked up his urn of "question sticks," shook them till they were thoroughly mixed and when Chan Gow had selected one, studied the cryptic characters upon it long and attentively, at the same time muttering and shaking his head.

"It is a very difficult matter, Chan Gow Doy," he said. "You were an only son, born to your parents in their middle age and long after they had abandoned all hope. Is it not true?"

"That is true, sir scholar."

"In order to delude the evil spirits into the belief that you were a little dog and considered of no importance you were given the name of Gow Doy. To further safeguard you, your father had one of his cousins, who had many sons, pretend to adopt you."

Quan looked to Chan for confirmation.

"Yes; that is the way to fool the evil spirits, sir scholar," he said.

"But you may be certain that they were not deceived, Chan Gow Doy. They have been pursuing you and playing tricks upon you ever since. They have brought you great wealth, but only to take it away from you at the time of your greatest need—in your old age. And if they permit you to have a son they will just as surely take him away again—unless they are outwitted."

"Aih-yah!" cried Chan Gow Doy. "Let them take my fortune if they will, for I can then no more than starve, but if I have no son to perpetuate the family name and offer sacrifices at my grave, how can I ever get through the Ten Courts of Justice in the Kingdom of the Dead?"

"That is true. You must have a son—at any cost."

"I would freely give all I possess, sir scholar."

"You may have to, Chan Gow Doy."

"Tell me—what is to be done?"

"Much—if the evil spirits are to be deceived. They must be led to believe that you have a

son despite their machinations, and that you have parted with your fortune without their intervention. Thinking themselves defeated, they will retire in disgust and cease meddling with your affairs."

"But how is that to be done, sir scholar? My parents took every precaution, and yet the spirits were not deceived."

"Your parents were not well advised, Chan Gow Doy."

"I shall do as you say, sir scholar."

"If you fail, I will not answer for the consequences," declared Quan. "First, you must close the mouth of the midwife so tightly that it will not open again. Then you must proceed exactly as you would have done had your seventh daughter been your first son. You must give a great feast to your friends, make a handsome present to the Mother of Heaven, and on the 29th day, when you shave the head of the child, give her a boy's name, attire her in boy's clothing, have her adopted into another family with many sons and rear her exactly as though she were a boy."

"And my fortune, sir scholar?"

"That matter will be attended to in due time."

"It shall be as you say, sir scholar," promised Chan.

Quan Quock Ming was so lost in meditation on the past and speculation in the future that he had completely forgotten his mechanical croak: "Fortunes! Good fortunes for all!" He shud-

dered as he recalled the long neglected bones of his ancestor and the oath he had taken upon the chicken's head. Yes, he had indeed lived the life of a chicken, scratching and pecking in the garbage of Chinatown for years. But at last the wealthy gambler had given his confidence and opened his purse. He would be able to return to the Middle Kingdom, inter his father's bones in a high place and placate the evil spirits that had cursed and pursued him. A good *fung shui* would come to him, and he would spend his last days in the ease and luxury of a Mandarin. Even if he lived like a chicken he would not die because of a chicken, be killed like a chicken or become a chicken in the next life.

On the twenty-ninth day little Ah Chut, her head freshly shaven, was clothed in bright-colored silks and carried out upon the public streets in the arms of her father; and Chan Gow Doy, who had seldom been heard to speak and had never been seen to smile, stopped all whom he met to laugh and to chat, saying:

"Just look at my fine boy!"

He stood before Quan Quock Ming, smiling and whispering:

"When I placed him upon a quilt and offered him many different articles in order to discover the calling he will follow when grown up, he would not look at the book, so he is not to be a scholar; he would not touch the abacus, so he is not to be a business man; but what do you think,

sir scholar? He stretched out both hands for my revolver, so he is to be a fighting man!"

Both laughed so long and so loudly that many people paused to wonder. As Quan Quock Ming's eyes fell upon the baby's cap adorned with a rooster's comb of red silk instead of the customary puppy ears of fur, his face grew grave.

"What name did you give?" he asked.

"While he was kicking on the floor I threw a poultryman's net over him—be sure it was a clean one—and named him 'Little Chicken.' "

"Hai-i-ie!" The fortune-teller sat staring and blinking, muttering to himself: "Guy Juy! Guy Juy!"

"Is that not a good name with which to deceive the evil spirits?" asked Chan Gow Doy, but Quan Quock Ming merely shook his head and clicked his tongue.

CHAPTER III

QUAN QUOCK MING'S REVENGE

GUY JUY spent more of her time on the streets and in her father's gambling house than in her own home. Before she was two years old she knew every place in Chinatown where sugar-cane, candy or sweet cakes were sold—and she had learned the location of every shooting-gallery. If her father tried to lead her past one of them without pausing to buy sweetmeats or to listen to the pop of firearms, she would throw herself upon the sidewalk, kick, scream and swear as fluently as any loser at his gaming tables; and whenever she wandered away—which was almost daily—he was sure to find her munching candy and listening contentedly to the crack of pistols.

On New Year's day Guy Juy, attired exactly like her father in a cap with a red button, a blue silk jacket and yellow silk trousers tied at the ankles, accompanied him when he made his calls, strutting proudly at his side, bowing gravely to every host and wishing great prosperity with a lisping "*kung-hee fat tsoyl!*" Everywhere she received the customary presents of silver coin wrapped in red paper, trying vainly to estimate the quantity of sweetmeats she would be able to

buy; and everywhere she was praised, petted and indulged as the first-born son destined to become the successor of her wealthy father.

The last call of the day was made at the home of Quan Quock Ming. Guy Juy shrank from him with undisguised aversion, and instead of the polite greeting she cursed him roundly. Neither Quan's offering of coin nor the threats of her father moved her.

"You're a very bad boy," said Quan shaking his head and frowning at her, but she merely stuck out her tongue at him and returned to her candy.

Chan Gow Doy sank wearily upon a chair, bowed his head and sat quite still.

"Are you ill, younger brother?" inquired Quan solicitously.

"I am sick at heart, sir scholar," replied the gambler, after a moment's hesitation. "For almost two years I have been very near all the joy that comes to the father of a son, pretending—always pretending—to possess it, but never—never—able to take it. Today—today—as the time draws near, I am overwhelmed with anxiety. If the next one be not a son, sir scholar, I shall surely despair—and die."

"Be patient and confident, younger brother," admonished Quan Quock Ming. "You have done all that a man who is engaged in a contest with evil spirits can do. Still—if I had another hundred dollars to offer as a sacrifice at the temple, it would be timely and perhaps propitiatory."

Chan Gow Doy gave him the money as readily as he had always given, but with little hope that the spirits would be vanquished, then took his departure. Quan unlocked his camphor-wood chest, took from it a bag of gold, poured it upon the table, ran his fingers through it again and again, then fell to stacking it and counting it.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "A fortune already! And if the next one be a son—ah!"

He put the gold back into the bag and the bag back into the chest, and he had scarcely turned the key upon it when hurried footsteps sounded upon the stairs and an impatient ring came at his door. When it was opened Chan Gow Doy burst into the room.

"I have a son, sir scholar!" he shouted. "At last I have a son!"

"Sh-h-h! Not so loud, younger brother," warned Quan Quock Ming.

"Why can I not shout it to the world, sir scholar?"

"The evil spirits may hear you, take him from you and turn your moment of greatest happiness into one of deepest grief. That is their way, Chan Gow Doy. You must still be patient and watchful. Return quickly to your home, close the mouth of the midwife with gold as you did before, and announce to your friends that another daughter has been born to you."

"Another daughter!"

"Yes."

"Aih-yah! Am I never to know the joy of a son?"

"Not if he is taken from you. Do as I bid you. Otherwise, I will not undertake to answer for the results."

"You have found a son for me, sir scholar, and I shall trust you to preserve him to me. It shall be as you say."

And the first-born son of Chan Gow Doy became the last born daughter, and was given no name, but called No. 8.

Guy Juy, as the petted and pampered son of the house of Chan, scarcely knew the meaning of a wish denied. The idolatrous parents were her obedient servants, the despised daughters of the family her absolute slaves. So when the midwife refused to give her the baby to play with she flew into a passion that nothing would assuage. She threw herself upon the floor, kicked, screamed, cursed and bumped her head till she was exhausted, then listened sullenly to bribe-offerings of unheard-of quantities of candies, cakes and firecrackers, only to burst into another paroxysm the moment she recovered sufficient strength and breath. Every trick and every artifice that her parents could think of was employed, but nothing would swerve her for an instant from the determination to have Ah Bot; so at last in sheer desperation her father told her she could have the baby all for her own, first exacting a promise from her that she would be very care-

ful of her little sister and never feed her candy or peanuts.

Guy Juy and Ah Bot became inseparable. She soon learned to give the baby his bottle, and he would take it from no other. When his teeth began to come and he grew peevish and fretful no hand but Guy Juy's could rock his cradle, no finger but hers could rub his aching gums. It was Guy Juy who taught him to walk and first guided him to the candy shops, where she drove bargains with the dealers and explained that she was Chan Gow Doy's boy, and Ah Bot was her little sister.

Together they roved the streets and alleys of Chinatown in search of adventure, pausing to pull feathers from the chickens in the poultrymen's coops, to make grimaces at the old pipe-mender on the corner or to steal rides on passing trucks; but Guy Juy was always careful to avoid the stand of the old fortune-teller, whose sinister smile or savage frown filled her with fear and aversion. She guided Ah Bot into the shopping district of the city, where he stared wide-eyed and wondering at the foreign devils and into the shop windows, clinging in bewilderment to Guy Juy's hand. And once with money she found in her mother's cupboard she took him by ferry-boat and train to the city across the bay, bought all the candies and cakes they could carry, spent the entire afternoon practicing in a shooting-gallery, and when night came sat in a doorway consoling

Ah Bot till the police found them and sent them home.

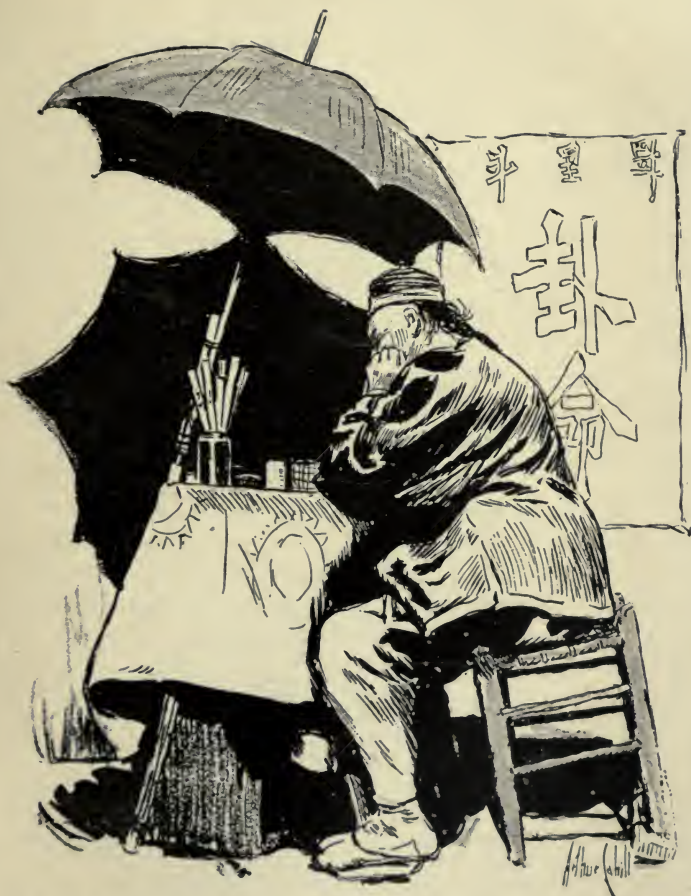
As Guy Juy grew older she played shuttle-cock in the alleys, fought with the boys of the quarter and threw stones at little foreign devils who wandered into Chinatown. In all of her deviltry Ah Bot was a silent and passive accessory, sticking close to Guy Juy's side, running when she ran, stopping when she stopped, and always looking up to his big brother with pride. And for once Chinatown was unanimous in an opinion—Guy Juy was a very bad boy; but whenever some indignant victim of her pranks expressed that opinion to Chan Gow Doy, he would smile and answer:

"Oh, boys will be boys."

Guy Juy had one hero—Wong Kit, the son of a merchant—a lithe wiry lad, gentle in speech and manner till he was roused and then a tiger in temper and courage. He was feared and avoided by the other boys, and held himself aloof from them, but conceived a great liking for little Guy Juy. And she was never happier than when sitting by his side on a door-step in the dusk of the evening listening to tales of highbinder wars and the prowess of hatchetmen.

"And some day," he often said to her, "you and I will be great fighting men together."

Guy Juy, fired with that ambition, watched a chance to steal her father's revolver, terrified her sisters with it, threatened them with instant



It was the afternoon before Chinese New Year and under the influence of the warm February sun Quan Quock Ming fell into a doze..... 279

death if they told her father and carried the weapon in the waist-band of her trousers till the bulge beneath her blouse attracted attention and prompted the search that discovered it.

Though Chan Gow Doy's face wore a smile his heart was filled with misgivings.

"What can I do about it, sir scholar?" he asked of Quan Quock Ming during one of their frequent consultations. "My girl has become a very bad boy, and my son is becoming a very good girl."

"Wait, younger brother—wait," admonished the fortune-teller. "When the time comes you shall have a good son and a valuable daughter."

It was the afternoon before Chinese New Year and under the influence of the warm February sun Quan Quock Ming, sitting at his little table on the street corner, fell into a doze. When his chin dropped upon his chest he started and sat bolt upright for a moment, rubbed his eyes and remembered that prosperity had relieved him of the necessity of watching for prospective patrons. He planted his elbows upon the table, rested his fat face in his hands, closed his eyes and was soon slumbering peacefully.

Guy Juy, passing warily, heard him snore, paused and grinned. She drew a stout cord from her trousers pocket, tied one end of it to a leg of the table, slipped around the corner, braced herself, gave the string a jerk and ran. The table flew from under the old fortune-teller, and he

sprawled upon the sidewalk; but his pursuit was unexpectedly swift and sudden. Guy Juy, turning to look back, stumbled over a chicken coop and escaped capture only by rolling under a wagon and scrambling out on the other side.

"You little she-devil!" roared Quan Quock Ming, as he stood at the edge of the sidewalk shaking his fist at her. "Wait! Wait! I will fix you!"

Guy Juy put her thumb to her nose, wagged her fingers derisively and scampered away to watch the preparations for the approaching festivities.

Confectioners were heaping stacks of sweetmeats upon their counters, and merchants were wrapping coins in red papers, while their employees wove ropes of fire-crackers and put up decorations. Creditors were pursuing debtors, and debtors were dodging creditors on this day of accounting, and when they met there were many altercations and a few fights. With the coming of darkness crackers began to pop at intervals here and there, like the desultory firing of the old year's pickets being driven in, quickly followed by the crash of musketry at close quarters, now dying down, now breaking out afresh and dying again; and, at last, the silence that told of the death of the old year.

Guy Juy was in the thick of it all from beginning to end, even forgetting to go home for the evening meal, missing nothing, enjoying every-

thing, laughing, shouting and fighting with the boys of the street over the possession of unexploded crackers; and when she climbed the stairs of her home, grimy, happy and breathless with the excitement of it all, a new joy awaited her. The fine clothing to be worn by the members of the family on the morrow was spread out on the chairs of the living-room—rich embroideries for the girls, and green silk trousers that tied at the ankles and a purple silk blouse for Guy Juy.

"You may put them on now," said the mother, and all scampered away to dress themselves in their holiday attire.

"Aih-yah!" cried Guy Juy, as she strutted about with her hands tucked in her long sleeves. "Don't you wish you were boys, so you could always do exactly as you please? Hai-ie! You are only good-for-nothing girls dressed for the market like pigs, and have to sit around home waiting for someone to buy you! Don't you wish you could make New Year calls on merchants, drink rice wine and get presents of silver? And when I am old enough I shall be a fighting man!"

The older girls frowned and angry retorts rose to their lips, but their mother scowled at them and shook her head.

Guy Juy was calculating the amount of money she would receive on the morrow, wondering if it would be enough to pay for a revolver, when a ring came at the door, and Quan Quock Ming entered, red in the face with anger and the exertion

of climbing the stairs. He stopped when his eyes fell upon Guy Juy, and he stood glaring at her malevolently till he could get his breath. With the prank of the afternoon still fresh in her mind she slipped to her father's side for protection. Quan Quock Ming turned to Chan Gow Doy and raising his hands high above his head roared:

"The time has come, Chan Gow Doy! The time has come!" Then he strode across the room and shook a fat finger in Guy Juy's face. "I made a boy of you, and now I shall make a girl of you!" he bellowed.

"You shan't! You can't!" cried Guy Juy with an oath. "I won't be a girl!"

For the first time in her life she felt the weight of her father's hand. A buffet on the side of the head sent her sprawling upon the floor.

"Let that teach you the respect that is due your elders!" he roared. "You *are* a girl! You have always been a girl—and you shall remain a girl! Garb and comport yourself accordingly, or you shall be well beaten."

On the morning of the New Year Guy Juy, dressed in the cast-off clothing of an elder sister, her forehead shaven like a boy's, sat in sullen silence listening to the taunts and jeers of her elder sisters while they attired themselves for the holiday.

"Look at the boy girl!" exclaimed one.

"No; that is a girl boy!" laughed another.

Ah Bot, attired in a yellow silk blouse and blue

silk trousers, his head freshly shaven and his queue carefully braided, came to bid Guy Juy good-bye before departing with his father to pay the New Year calls.

"Where is Guy Juy?" he asked.

"Aih-yah!" laughed one of his sisters. "There is no Guy Juy; but there is Ah Chut!"

"See!" cried another. "The great fighting man is only the seventh pig!"

Guy Juy flew at them in a frenzy of rage, cursing, scratching, kicking and biting, till she was overpowered by her sisters and beaten by her parents. And they flung her into a corner like a bundle of old rags, locked the door upon her and left her to her own meditations.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOY GIRL

ANYONE who, for thirteen years, has enjoyed all the privileges and immunities of an only son in a large family, who has been the tyrant of the household and the terror of Chinatown, ruling the home inflexibly and roving the streets unrestrainedly, only to be suddenly cuffed and cursed by parents who had always been indulgent and jeered by sisters who had always been respectful and obedient, locked within doors that had always opened to the lightest knock and—worst of all—told that she was not Guy Juy, the first-born son, but merely Ah Chut, a nameless daughter—anyone less spirited and rebellious would have been completely crushed. But Ah Chut was only stunned. When her family bolted the door upon her she spat after them and cried vehemently:

“I shan’t be a girl! I shan’t!”

She ran to the window and saw not Ah Bot, the little sister whom she had loved and protected from babyhood, but Chew Doo, a boy with freshly shaven head, going reluctantly with his father to pay the holiday calls, and heard him crying:

"I don't want to be a boy!"

Ah Chut sat down to ponder upon the sudden metamorphosis that had robbed her of her name and sex, that had overthrown her little despotism and had transformed Ah Bot, the seventh daughter, into Chew Doo, the Glory of his ancestors, the first-born son of the house of Chan. It meant that she must sit at home and learn to ply the needle instead of roaming the streets and practicing the use of the revolver; that she must be a household drudge instead of a fighting man of the Bing Kung tong; that she could never go out of the house again unless accompanied by her mother or an elder sister; that she must then walk with mincing steps, keeping her eyes modestly cast down when she passed the contemptuous loungers on the street corners; that she would not be the natural successor of her wealthy and influential father, but merely one of his possessions, to be sold as three elder sisters had been.

"I shan't be a girl!" she cried again, then flung herself upon her bed and burst into a flood of tears.

Her first paroxysm of rage and grief had nearly spent itself before she remembered that only girls wept. She quickly smothered her sobs, sprang up and cried again and again:

"I shan't! I shan't!"

She looked about her for means of escape from the humiliation and misery of it all, thinking only of flight—just flight, swift and immediate, with

no thought of anything that lay beyond. As she crossed the room toward the window she caught a glimpse of her shaven forehead in a mirror and stopped. That would not do. Everywhere a boy in girl's clothing would attract attention that would inevitably result in speedy capture and return. She made a quick search for an old suit of her own and found one that she had outgrown—but it would suffice. She tore off the clothing that had been forced upon her, donned the boyish attire, climbed out on the fire-escape and was scrambling down the narrow ladder when an old woman across the alley stuck her head out the window, stared at her in amazement and screamed:

“Hai-ie! What are you dōing in boy's clothing, Ah Chut? Aren't you ashamed of yourself?”

Ah Chut stopped abruptly, hung her head and climbed slowly back. It was hopeless. Everyone had heard of her disgrace, and everywhere she would be recognized, not as Guy Juy, the son of Chan Gow Doy, but as Ah Chut, his daughter. She crept back into her room, changed her clothing, threw herself upon her bed and cried herself to sleep.

Ah Chut remained steadfastly in the seclusion of her home, enduring taunts, jeers and blows in dogged silence rather than suffer the humiliation of appearing on the public streets, and Chew Doo, who had been almost her sole companion

and always her confidant, sought every opportunity to be with her. The timid, shrinking lad had found his boyhood almost as insufferable as Ah Chut had her girlhood, for the men in the streets laughed at him and teased him, the other boys chased him and threw stones at him, and everyone told him that he was nothing but a girl in boy's clothing. Whenever they found themselves alone in the house they resumed the garb of their choice and played that Ah Chut was Guy Juy, the boy, and Chew Doo was Ah Bot, the girl; and often at night they would climb up the fire-escape and scamper over the roofs of the houses in the block. But even that diversion—Ah Chut's only pleasure—was taken from her when their father returned unexpectedly one night and caught them at their play.

"Hai-iel!" he bellowed. "Are you determined to bring disgrace upon the whole family? Do you want to degrade the only son of the house of Chan by making a girl of him? Who then will perpetuate the family name and be the glory of his ancestors?"

He gave her a beating and forbade her even to speak to Chew Doo, but they often found means of conversing secretly, and always Ah Chut would put her arms around him and say:

"Even if I cannot be a boy, Chew Doo, you must be a worthy son."

By the time the hair had grown long upon Ah Chut's forehead she had learned—mainly by lis-

tening at keyholes—the whole story of the deceit that had been practiced upon her and the evil spirits. Toward her parents she felt no great resentment, for they had but followed the advice of the old fortune-teller in order to protect her brother against malign influences; but the aversion that she had always felt toward Quan Quock Ming grew into bitterest hatred. Every day, and a dozen times a day, she would stop at her window, from which she could see him sitting on his stool at the street corner, scowl at him, gnaw her finger-nails in impotent rage and reiterate a vow of vengeance. She meditated slipping out in the night-time and setting fire to his house, but reflected that her own home, which was in the same block, and possibly the whole Chinese quarter, would be endangered. Whenever she could get possession of her father's revolver she would rest it on the window sill and draw a careful bead upon him. As good a marksman as she was, she knew the distance was too great to leave the result of a shot beyond question, or she would have fired. Instead she would take the cartridges out, aim again and pull the trigger, and in her imagination she could hear the crash of the explosion and see him sprawl upon the sidewalk.

She thought of lying in wait and shooting him from a doorway, but she must have some one to warn her of the approach of the police so that escape would be certain. She suggested it to Chew Doo, but he trembled at the thought of vio-

lence and death and begged her to dismiss it from her mind. There was only one other—Wong Kit, the hero of her boyhood days. Had he not often told her that some day they would be fighting men together? So she watched at the window for him, and when she saw him passing beneath it called to him. He stopped, glanced up, saw a strange girl looking down at him, spat contemptuously and walked on. Ah Chut turned away in disappointment and chagrin, but some day in some way, she knew not when or how, she would be revenged upon Quan Quock Ming. Upon that she was determined.

CHAPTER V

AN ACCOUNTING DEMANDED

QUAN QUOCK MING had finished the evening meal, the dishes had been cleared away, and he was sitting at the table with an abacus, an account-book and stacks of gold coins before him. When he had finished checking up and had struck the total, he smiled and rubbed his hands with satisfaction, for it ran well into five figures. Then he drew from its envelope a large document bearing the enormous seal of Chan/Gow Doy, read it carefully and pondered.

"Everything — everything he has — in my hands!" he mused. "The evil spirits certainly will never be able to get it—but how can I manage to keep it?"

A ring came at the door, and he barely had time to lock his documents and gold in his camphor-wood chest before Chan Gow Doy was shown in.

"Ha! Long life and great happiness, younger brother!" greeted Quan.

Chan Gow Doy frowned.

"You will have neither," he said, "if you do not return my fortune to me at once."

"Hai-i-ie!" exclaimed the fortune-teller. "Is that the way you talk to your friend and adviser?"

"You have been well paid for both your friendship and advice—well paid, Quan Quock Ming—but I am not to be stripped like a beef bone," replied Chan Gow Doy.

"And is that not what I am protecting you against, younger brother?" protested Quan.

"I am able to protect myself, Quan Quock Ming."

"Against evil spirits? Who is able to do that?" Quan shook his head. "No; it cannot be done, except by one who knows their ways."

"Do you also hold written powers from the evil spirits? Are you their friend and adviser—or merely their instrument?" demanded Chan.

"Hai-i-ie! How can you say such things, Chan Gow Doy? Have I not been their enemy for years? Have I not protected you against them? Did I not outwit them when they had decided that you were not to have a son?"

"Have you not been well paid for all that you did? Have I not always given you whatever you asked?"

"To be sure, younger brother. Was not my advice worth all that you paid for it?"

"Yes," admitted Chan Gow Doy, "but that is no reason why you should defraud me of my whole fortune."

"Defraud you! Hai-i-ie!" and Quan started up angrily.

"Rob me, then."

Quan fell back on his stool, shook his head and clicked his tongue.

"Certainly you must be possessed of an evil spirit, Chan Gow Doy, to use such language toward one who has always been your best friend—one who has always regarded you as a younger brother. Why did you place everything in my hands? To preserve it, of course. You know very well that the evil spirits gave you wealth, only to deal you a heavier blow—when they take it away again at the time of your greatest need. Have I not kept it safely for you?"

"You have kept it," admitted Chan Gow Doy, "and you are still keeping it, though I have demanded its return many times."

"And have you not always managed your affairs as though your fortune were your own?"

"Is it not?"

"Sh-h-h! Not so loud," admonished Quan Quock Ming. "The evil spirits may hear you and take it from you. Of course it is yours—in substance—but mine in form. The paper you gave conveying it all to me means nothing to any one—except the spirits. They think the property is mine and dare not meddle with it."

"And you think it is yours and don't want me to meddle with it—but I want it. I may die."

"In that case, younger brother, it will be returned to your family."

"If I cannot procure its return while I am still

living, I surely could not do it when I am dead. Give me the paper, Quan Quock Ming."

"But reflect," argued the fortune-teller. "If the evil spirits should take it from you while you are living, your family will have nothing when you are dead. Think of the risks you are taking."

"I am thinking of the risk I *have* taken," replied Chan. "It makes little difference, so far as my family is concerned, whether you or the evil spirits take it from me. Give me the paper, Quan Quock Ming."

"Do you demand it?"

"Have I not done so many times? Give it to me."

"Then," said Quan decisively, "I on my part demand an accounting."

"An accounting!"

"Yes. Have I not held your written authority for fifteen years?"

"Yes—as a matter of form."

"And have you not said many times that you would give all you possessed to have a son?"

"Yes—if it were necessary."

"And through my advice you found a son. Lawfully I could claim it all, but I am not only just—I am generous, and I shall make a fair compromise with you. You shall pay me ten per cent of all profits for the fifteen years that it has been in my hands—just as though you had returned to China, and I had acted as your agent."

"Compromise! I shall not pay one cent!" roared Chan Gow Doy.

"Then I shall keep every cent," replied Quan Quock Ming, firmly.

"Give me that paper!" demanded Chan. He advanced menacingly upon Quan.

"I shall give you nothing. Get out of my house!"

"Give it to me!"

Chan Gow Doy sprang upon him, seized him by his fat throat and tried to throttle him. Stools were overturned, the table was upset and the kerosene lamp crashed to the floor and went out. One of Quan's wives, alarmed by the sounds of the struggle, threw open a window and blew a police whistle. A passing patrolman ran up the stairs, burst in the door and pulled the combatants apart.

"He first tried to rob me—then murder me!" cried Quan Quock Ming, when an interpreter had been called. "I have a weak heart, and this will surely kill me!"

The policeman recognized them both, put Chan out of the house and told Quan to apply for a warrant if he wished his assailant arrested.

CHAPTER VI

GLORY OF HIS ANCESTORS

THE elders of the clan of Chan, called in conference at the home of Chan Gow Doy, sat listening to his complaint. He told them all that had passed between him and Quan Quock Ming from the time, seventeen years before, when he had first sought advice from the fortune-teller.

"I called a meeting of the Six Companies," he said in conclusion, "laid the whole matter before them and demanded justice, but Quan Quock Ming was there with a lot of fighting men from the Suey Sing *tong* at his back to shout and to threaten, so the directors dared do nothing but shake their heads and recommend a compromise. Now what is to be done about it?"

"You should join the Bing Kung *tong* and get its fighting men behind you," advised one of Chan's clansmen.

"I thought of that and spoke of it to the president of the Bing Kung *tong*," said Chan.

"What did he say?"

"He said that though the Bing Kungs and Suey Sings were often at war with one another, it would not look well for either to meddle in the controversy of one who was not a member—

that it would look much like buying trouble. Quan Quock Ming is a member of the Suey Sings, while I belong to no *tong*."

"You should have joined one long ago—for protection."

"I did not need it, for I have always paid the foreign devils' police for it—and have received it."

"But in such a matter they can do nothing," said another. "Why don't you buy a lawyer and take the matter into the courts of the foreign devils?"

"I have also considered that," replied Chan Gow Doy, "but Quan Quock Ming would bring a hundred men from the Suey *tong* to take oath that they had heard me promise to give him all that I possessed."

"But you can get a hundred men from the clan of Chan to swear they had heard him say that the paper you gave him was merely to fool the evil spirits," declared one of the elders.

"I told that to the lawyer I consulted, and he said that in such a case the magistrate would believe neither side and leave matters as they were."

"Hai-ie! He would not take the word of honest merchants against the lying statements of *tong* men? How wicked!" and all shook their heads and clicked their tongues.

"The lawyer told me there was but one way to proceed," added Chan. "He said that if I could

get the paper back from him, he would have to prove everything, or the magistrate would do nothing."

"How can that be accomplished?" asked one of the elders.

"It cannot be done," declared Chan Gow Doy. "He keeps it locked in his camphor-wood chest. I have hired men to go to his house at night and take it from him by force, but they cannot gain admission. No; there is but one way to deal with such a man. I have lost my fortune, but he shall lose his life. I will offer a reward to all of the fighting men in Chinatown, and some one will surely accept it secretly."

"Hi low!"

The elders nodded emphatically in approval and took their departure.

Quan Quock Ming seated himself at his table, turned the lamp a little higher, picked up the *Analects of Confucius* and turned the pages to the Fourth Book.

"It is social good feeling that gives charm to a neighborhood," he read, half aloud. "And where is the wisdom of those who choose an abode where it does not abide? Those who are without it cannot abide long, either in straitened or happy circumstances. Those who possess it find contentment in it. Those who are wise go after it as men go after gain."

Quan nodded his approval. "What a foolish

man Chan Gow Doy is, that he cannot be content," he soliloquized, and resumed his reading. "Riches and honor are what men desire; but if they arrive at them by improper ways, they should not continue to hold them."

"That is quite true," and again he nodded. "Chan Gow Doy became wealthy through the losses of others at his gambling tables, therefore he should not continue to hold his wealth. I have really done him a great service in depriving him of it."

"The masterly man has an eye to virtue," he read, "the common man to earthly things; the former has an eye to penalties for error—the latter, to favor. Where there is habitual going after gain, there is much ill will. Men of loftier minds manifest themselves in their equitable dealings; small-minded men in their going after gain."

"Ha! Quite true!" mused Quan Quock Ming. "Chan Gow Doy is a very small-minded man of much ill will, so he should suffer the penalty of his error."

A ring at the door startled Quan. One of his wives entered the kitchen and looked at him questioningly.

"Find out who it is before you open the door," he ordered.

"Who is there?" she called.

"A girl," replied the one seeking admittance.

"Be sure that it is a girl and not a fighting man in disguise," warned Quan Quock Ming.

His wife slid a little panel at the side of the door and peered out.

"Stand back in the light so that I may see you," she ordered. "It is really a girl," she said to Quan, after she had scrutinized the visitor.

"Who is she?"

"She is a stranger to me."

"Ask her what she wants."

"Let me in—quick!" cried the girl, before she could be questioned. "I have run away and seek shelter."

"Admit her," ordered Quan at once.

He noted at a glance the girl's fine attire—such as is usually worn by slaves at banquets and occasionally by daughters of wealthy men on holidays.

"Hide me! Quick! Hide me!" she cried as she hurried into the room, her face half-concealed by the embroidered handkerchief she carried in her hand.

"Who are you?" demanded Quan brusklly.

"I am a slave girl who has run away," she replied. "Help me!"

"Return to your work and close the door," said Quan to his wife. It was not well for women to know too much. "To whom do you belong?" he asked the girl.

"To one of the family of Cheong. He brought me from Portland to sell me here, but I ran away."

"To what family do you belong?"

"To the clan of Quan."

"Is that why you rang at my door?"

"No; all doors here are alike to me. I ran up the stairs till there were no more."

"Were you seen to enter this house?" asked Quan.

"No; no one saw me. Please hide me—or take me quickly to the foreign devils' mission."

Quan Quock Ming reflected. Here was a matter that promised profit, and the only problem was to make the most of it. A little could be gained by notifying the owner of the whereabouts of the girl and accepting what he chose to pay. More could be made by keeping her concealed till a large reward were offered for her return, and still more by hiding her till pursuit had been abandoned and then selling her in some other city. The risks were commensurate with the profits, so he must move cautiously. It was important that he should learn all that he could concerning the matter as quickly as possible.

"Very well," he said. "I will keep you—safely—till I can find an opportunity to get you to the foreign devils' mission—secretly."

Quan rose from his stool, turned to the wall and took down his fur-lined jacket. He heard the bolt on the kitchen door shot into place, whirled to learn the meaning of it and looked into the muzzle of a large revolver.

"If you sound an alarm I will shoot," said the girl, and there was a gleam in her small eyes and

a firmness in her warning that told him she would do it.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Not so loud," she ordered, and stepped closer to him. "I want to kill you—but not just yet. Unlock that!" and she pointed to the camphor-wood chest.

"I am a poor man," he whined. "Would you take all——"

"Unlock it—and be quick about it." She thrust the revolver almost within an arm's length of his breast. Quan glanced about for some means of escape, then obeyed her reluctantly. "Throw back the lid!" He did as he was ordered. "Now take out all the papers and spread them on the table."

Quan obeyed the command, being careful to keep the bag of coin covered with his long sleeves while he rummaged in the chest. When the papers were spread out, the girl picked up the one that bore the seal of Chan Gow Doy and thrust it inside her blouse.

"That is all," she said, and backed quickly to the bedroom door, keeping him covered with the revolver.

"Why have you robbed me of that which is of no value to you?" demanded Quan.

"You are fortunate in escaping with your life, which is of no value to any one," she replied.

"Why do you wish to take my life?"

"Because you took mine—and some day I will take yours!"

Her eyes blazed at the recollection of all she had lost and suffered, her teeth clenched with hatred and new determination, and her finger began to tighten on the trigger.

"Who are you?" gasped Quan Quock Ming.

"I was Chan Gow Doy's boy—Guy Juy," she replied. "Now I am only Ah Chut!"

Quan staggered back and stared at her wide-eyed. His jaw sagged, his face grew ashen and he trembled from head to foot. Ah Chut smiled grimly at the thought of the terror she had inspired, and shoved the revolver toward him. He closed his eyes and with a moan crumpled down in a heap upon the floor. Ah Chut laughed outright and lowered the revolver.

"Remember! I will kill you yet!" she cried, then slammed the bedroom door, bolted it behind her, climbed out on the fire-escape and fled over the housetops.

Chan Gow Doy was sitting at home with his face buried in his hands. A demand had been served upon him that day to deliver all property in his possession to Quan Quock Ming, and with it a covert threat that failure to comply would necessitate action by the Suey Sing *tong*. Chew Doo entered from the adjoining room.

"Aih-yah!" cried Chan Gow Doy. "You are the cause of all my misfortune—you, who should

have been born a girl—and are a girl. If you were only half the son that Ah Chut is——”

Without a word Chew Doo drew a paper from his blouse and handed it to his father.

“What is this?” cried Chan Gow Doy in amazement. “Where did this come from?”

Chew Doo, with his head bowed respectfully and his eyes upon the floor, hesitated an instant before he answered:

“From Quan Quock Ming’s camphor-wood chest.”

“My son—my son!” cried Chan Gow Doy. He flung his arms around Chew Doo and hugged him to his breast. “What a joy to have a worthy son!”

Ah Chut, listening at the door, smiled, ran to her own room, threw herself upon her bed and cried—softly and happily.

CHAPTER VII

THE GIRL BOY

QUAN QUOCK MING was sitting at his usual place on the street corner, his shoulders hunched, his hands tucked in his long sleeves and his toes turned around the legs of his stool; but the serenity that had marked his repose through a long period of prosperity was gone. His low forehead was puckered to a frown, his heavy jaws were set savagely, his thick lips were compressed with hatred, and his beady eyes were fixed malevolently upon Chan Gow Doy, the gambler.

"Hai-i-ie!" he growled. "To lose a fortune that it took me fifteen years to get! And to be robbed by a girl! Hai-i-ie!"

Chan Gow Doy was standing at the entrance to his gambling-house, his shoulder braced against the door-jamb and one foot crossed negligently over the other. He puffed contentedly at his pipe and smiled with satisfaction when his eyes fell upon the fortune-teller.

"Aih-yah!" he chuckled. "What a great joke! The cunning old thief, who defrauded me of my whole fortune, outwitted by a mere boy!"

The truth of the matter lay with Quan, while the document remained with Chan; but it was the

result more than the means of its accomplishment that perturbed Quan and satisfied Chan.

Old Wong Yee Shi, with her arms full of meat, groceries and vegetables, waddled up the street and paused before Quan's table to get her breath and exchange bits of gossip.

"Aih-yah! This hill grows steeper every day, sir scholar," she grumbled.

Quan changed neither his expression nor the direction of his gaze. Wong Yee Shi shifted her parcels to one arm and mopped her face with a green silk handkerchief.

"Has the promoter of happiness and longevity any information that would be profitable to the procurer of husbands and wives?" she inquired.

"Go away!" ordered Quan, without taking his eyes off Chan Gow Doy.

"Hai-ie!"

Wong Yee Shi braced herself to deliver a curse appropriate to the occasion and the provocation and discovered that she was not receiving the undivided attention of the fortune-teller essential to its effectiveness. She turned and saw Chan Gow Doy smoking and smiling. Everyone in Chinatown had heard of the controversy that had arisen between them.

"Haie! Haie!" she cackled. "Two dogs and a bone! But I have done a good bit of business with him, I can tell you. Six husbands for six girls—and twelve commissions out of it!"

Quan started up angrily. "Go away, I tell

you!" he bellowed. "What do I care about your business or your commissions?"

"What do you care?" screamed the undaunted marriage-broker. "You have never failed to demand your share if you so much as mentioned a name to me. May evil spirits in the form of fleas pick the flesh from all fortune-tellers and leave their bones to rot in the gutter!"

Quan Quock Ming dropped on his stool helplessly. He knew that whenever Wong Yee Shi engaged in an altercation on the street a crowd quickly gathered to laugh and urge her on. He saw her gathering her breath for another outburst and raised a staying hand.

"One moment, Wong Yee Shi. It occurs to me that there is another bit of business in which you might find a profit."

"Haie! What do I care about your business, Quan Quock Ming?" she shrieked. "Take it to someone else," and she glared at him defiantly. "Well—what is it?"

"Chan Gow Doy still has another daughter."

"Another daughter! Aih-yah! Is she a boy, or is he a girl?"

"Chew Doo is a boy, Ah Chut is a girl."

"No; he is still a girl and she is still a boy. Who would want her for a wife?"

"That is for you to find out, Wong Yee Shi. In that way you may earn a triple fee, for I will pay as much as Chan Gow Doy or the father of the husband you may find. Now walk your way."

Wong Yee Shi, muttering maledictions upon all fortune-tellers, boy girls and girl boys, waddled off up the street. A fighting man of the Suey Sing *tong* stopped before Quan's table.

"The reward has been accepted, sir scholar," he whispered.

"So soon! Hai-ie!"

Quan sprang to his feet, gathered up his fortune-telling paraphernalia, snapped the legs of his table together, folded his stool and hurried up the street toward his home. Chan Gow Doy was looking after him, wondering at the celerity of his movements, when one of his clan came up, breathless and excited.

"Quick, elder cousin!" he gasped. "Hide! Quan Quock Ming has placed a price upon your head, and the fighting men of the Suey Sing *tong* have accepted it."

"Hai-ie!"

Chan Gow Doy dropped his pipe and ran toward his home.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ACCOUNT IS SETTLED

As Wong Yee Shi approached the home of Chan Gow Doy a face peered out of a doorway for an instant, then disappeared. She glanced across the street and saw two fighting men of the Suey Sing *tong* lounging in the doorway of a cigar store.

"Hai-ie! The cats are waiting for the mouse!" she muttered and hurried on, her heart keeping time with the pat of her slippers.

As she climbed the three flights of stairs leading to the top floor of the tenement she heard panels softly sliding at each door and knew that watchful eyes were peering out at her, though she could see nothing in the dark halls. There was no answer to her ring at Chan Gow Doy's door and after waiting a moment she repeated it.

"Who is there?" inquired a tremulous female voice.

"I am Wong Yee Shi, the promoter of conjugal felicity," she answered.

There was whispered conversation, the soft sliding of a panel, the quick scrutiny of frightened eyes, the drawing of bolts, and then the door

that was opened just wide enough to admit her was slammed behind her.

"One cannot be too careful at such times," apologized the wife of Chan Gow Doy.

"Certainly—unless one wishes to become a widow," cackled Wong Yee Shi. "But you are too venerable and too corpulent to think of such a thing. Besides, my business is to procure husbands, not to dispose of them. Don't you want one for your seventh daughter?"

"Certainly—if one can be found. Ah Chut! Ah Chut!" she called.

Ah Chut came from her bedroom. When she saw Wong Yee Shi she stopped in the doorway and scowled.

"Aih-yah!" exclaimed the marriage-broker. "What a fine-looking girl you have made out of a bad boy! Without a doubt I shall be able to find a good husband for her very quickly."

According to all the rules of propriety Ah Chut should have blushed and hung her head. Instead she poured upon the head of the marriage-broker all the curses she had learned when she was the bad boy of Chinatown.

"Oh, I know a young man who will be just the husband for her," laughed Wong Yee Shi. "Wong Kit has a wealthy father, and he is a fighting man, so he will be able to provide her with fine apparel and give her a beating whenever she deserves it."

Ah Chut flushed and dropped her eyes as she

recalled the evenings she had sat on doorsteps listening to Wong Kit's tales of highbinder wars, and his prediction that when she grew up they would be fighting men together.

"And I shall tell his father," continued Wong Yee Shi, "that Ah Chut is like a dove—quiet and stupid—with no mind of her own."

"If I am sold to any man for a wife," declared Ah Chut, "I shall first put opium in his noodles and then hang myself."

When Wong Yee Shi had departed, chuckling and cackling over the prospects of a match that would give her so much satisfaction and profit, Chan Gow Doy entered from an inner room.

"You worthless pig!" he roared. "How can I ever get for you one-tenth of the sum I have wasted upon you? But I care nothing for the money and nothing for you—you demon's brat! But my son—my only son! The one who should be the glory of his ancestors! You are determined that he shall be nothing but a girl! Was ever a man so cursed? Let this teach you obedience and respect for your family!" and he gave her a beating that left her stunned and bleeding.

Late at night Chew Doo stole to her bedside. He found her still sobbing and moaning with pain.

"It is hard, elder sister," he whispered, as he took her hand and held it, "but try to be a woman."

"I can't, Chew Doo—I can't!" cried Ah Chut vehemently.

"I know, Ah Chut. It is as difficult for me to be a man; but you are a woman, and women must become wives, while men may be anything they choose."

"It does not matter what becomes of me, Chew Doo," she replied, "but you are the only son of our father, and you must be a man—you must be—you *shall* be—for the honor of the clan of Chan!"

The deadly feud between the fortune-teller and the gambler, both of whom had figured so prominently in the affairs of Chinatown, and who had been such fast friends for so long a time, stirred the whole quarter. As the residents passed along the streets they glanced at the corners where for years Quan Quock Ming had sat on his stool and Chan Gow Doy had lounged in his doorway, shook their heads and muttered:

"The foxes are still hiding in their holes!"

They paused at shop doors to discuss the affair in whispers and before the deadwalls to read the latest news conveyed by flaming placards. They learned that the Six Companies were "doing all in their power to adjust amicably the differences that had recently arisen between two prominent persons," and that the See Yup society had appointed "peace-talkers with the hope that a compromise might be effected." And they read the announcements of timorous men disclaiming all

interest in the controversy or sympathy with either side, for fear that "a horse might be mistaken for a deer."

Quan Quock Ming, fearing that retaliatory rewards upon his head might have been offered and accepted, dared not venture across the threshold of his home—scarcely beyond the opium bunk in an inner room that had no windows. Fighting men still loitered in doorways watching the home of Chan Gow Doy, and watched in turn by Chan Gow Doy and the police stationed in the quarter. Days passed—days of tense waiting and watching, punctuated only by the occasional visits of "peace-talkers" urging Quan and Chan to submit their differences to arbitration, in the hope that the loss of life and injury to business resulting from a highbinder war might be averted; but both stood firm. Neither would recede in the slightest degree.

Urgent messages calculated to lure Chan Gow Doy into the open were received by him over the telephone and by mail, but he was too well acquainted with the methods of highbinders to venture out. Occasionally at night stealthy footsteps could be heard on the roof of his home, and once when Ah Chut opened the iron shutters of her bedroom a face peered in at her.

At last came the police to the home of Chan Gow Doy with a warrant of arrest charging him with robbing Quan Quock Ming, and he was compelled to accompany them to the city prison.

Members of his clan quickly provided bail and employed white bodyguards to accompany him and protect him on his way to and from the courtroom.

"Be watchful," they were warned, "or the Suey Sings will surely kill him."

When the case came to a hearing Quan Quock Ming, his three wives, and several clansmen testified that Chan Gow Doy had gone to Quan's home at night and had robbed him; but Chan proved by his clansmen and a white watchman that at the time fixed by the other witnesses he was at his gambling-house; so the charge was dismissed.

Chan Gow Doy, with a protector on each side of him, hurried toward his home. As they approached the mouth of a small alley two Chinese boys emerged fighting viciously, and a large crowd surged out after them. Before Chan and his bodyguards could turn aside they were completely surrounded and swept along with the crowd. Suddenly there was a half-muffled report, and Chan Gow Doy sank to the sidewalk with a cry. His guards saw a large revolver lying beside him, seized the two men nearest to him and held them till the police came. They were Suey Sing fighting men, but no one could be found who would say that he had seen either fire the shot.

CHAPTER IX

A PROPHECY FULFILLED

THE elders of the clan of Chan, assembled at the home of Chan Gow Doy, sat with bowed heads waiting for the eldest and wisest among them to speak their minds.

"Our kinsman has been murdered," said the one who because of his age and probity occupied the seat of honor, "and two things remain to be done. His body must be buried in a manner befitting one of his wealth and station, but first his murder must be avenged. If that be not done his spirit will know no peace and his descendants will know nothing but misfortune."

"Two fighting men of the Suey Sing *tong* are already in prison," suggested one among them.

"That is not sufficient," declared the first speaker. "You may as well throw the weapon that killed him into the sea and say, 'He is avenged!' Quar Quock Ming, the wicked old fortune-teller, is the real murderer—the fighting men merely his instruments. Would the death of both of them wipe out the insult and maintain the honor of the clan of Chan?"

"No! No!" cried half a dozen of the elders.

"Then what is to be done?" asked one among them.

"It is the duty of Chan Chew Doo, the only son of our dead kinsman, to avenge his death and save the face of the family, and it is only for us to counsel and advise."

"Hai-ie! Chan Chew Doo?" cried one. "He is only a boy."

"No," said another contemptuously, "he is only a girl!"

"He has lived sixteen years," said the counselor of the family, "and at that age one is supposed to be a man. One must be a man."

"He will never do it," declared another.

"He must—or he shall be driven out of the family and be denied the privilege of worshipping our tutelary gods," said the head of the clan.

Chew Doo was summoned and stood before them with head bowed respectfully and eyes cast down.

"You are now the head of this household, Chew Doo," said the elder, "and it is your duty to maintain the honor of the family and to secure the repose of your father's spirit. See to it at once that Quan Quock Ming is removed. Employ whatever means you choose, but do not fail. If you do, you shall be driven out of the family of Chan—and that is worse than death."

With this admonition the elders departed slowly and gravely.

"I cannot do it! I *cannot*!" cried Chew Doo, when alone with Ah Chut.

"You must be a man, Chew Doo," she said

gently. "Our father's death must be avenged before his spirit can rest."

"I have offered a reward of ten times the usual amount, but no fighting man will accept it, for Quan Quock Ming is the head of the Suey Sing *tong*."

"I have always sworn I would do it," said Ah Chut, "for making a boy of me and then changing me to a girl—but you yourself must do it. You must be a man!"

"Be a man?" cried Chew Doo petulantly. "Be a man? I shall be a man when you are a woman, Ah Chut."

"Then I shall do it myself," she declared.

It was past midnight when Ah Chut and Chew Doo climbed out the window of her bedroom to the fire-escape and clambered to the roof. They had put aside their habiliments of mourning and were dressed as Chinese youths, with soft caps drawn low over their eyes and rubber-soled shoes upon their feet, and in the waistband of her trousers Ah Chut carried her father's revolver. They crept over the roofs of the neighboring houses, Ah Chut leading the way with grim determination, Chew Doo following fearfully and with chattering teeth. Ah Chut slipped down the fire-escape that led past the rooms of Quan Quock Ming, but all the windows that could be reached from it were protected by iron shutters closed and bolted. She climbed back to the roof and examined a small skylight that rose slightly above

it. With Chew Doo's pocket-knife she cut away the putty and raised a pane of glass, then peered down.

"Look, Chew Doo!" she whispered.

Quan Quock Ming lay upon his opium bunk with the light of a small oil lamp shining directly upon his face. His eyes were closed, and the regular rise and fall of his broad chest told them that he was sleeping heavily. Ah Chut lifted out the glass and laid it on the roof softly. She drew the revolver from her waistband, cocked it and rested it upon the sash. The time and opportunity for which she had waited and prayed for years was at hand. Her thoughts flew back to the night when the old fortune-teller had changed her from a happy boy, whose every whim had been indulged, into a wretched girl whose every wish had been denied. She thought of the humiliation she had suffered, the beatings she had received and the misery she had endured. Now he should pay for it all. Oh, how he should pay! She smiled grimly at the thought of it. But her vengeance must be complete. To kill him while he slept, to send him to the Ten Courts of Justice in the Kingdom of the Dead ignorant of the manner in which his fate had overtaken him, would be too merciful. She would wake him first and tell him who she was. She could see him start up and stare at her, his face convulsed with deadly fear for just an instant, and then, before he could cry out, she would send a bullet crashing

through his black heart. She could almost see him fall back upon his bunk with the blood gushing from his breast.

Ah Chut, kneeling by the skylight, slid the barrel of the revolver down till her hands rested on the sash. Chew Doo shuddered and turned away. Ah Chut took long and careful aim and opened her lips to call, but her throat closed and she could not utter a word. For a full half minute she held the weapon aimed at Quan Quock Ming's breast before she could utter a sound.

"Quan Quock Ming!" she called in a voice that sounded hoarse and strange. "Your time has come!"

The fortune-teller started from his couch and stared with protruding eyes at the figure silhouetted against the sky and the demoniacal face peering down at him.

"I am Little Chicken!"

With a gasp Quan Quock Ming fell back upon his couch, his eyes fixed and staring. Then Ah Chut tried to pull the trigger but her strength seemed to have left her. With a moaning sob she turned away and crept back to Chew Doo's side.

"I can't do it, Chew Doo! I can't!" she whispered. "I am nothing but a girl after all."

Chew Doo stared at her as she crumpled down at his feet sobbing impotently.

"Then I will do it—for I am a man!"

He snatched the revolver from her hand,

shoved her aside and crawled to the skylight. As he knelt and thrust the revolver through the opening Ah Chut closed her eyes and covered her ears. Quan Quock Ming lay on his back still staring. There was a crash and a roar. Chew Doo threw away the revolver and raced after Ah Chut over the roofs, down the fire escape and into their own home.

"You are surely a man!" she whispered.

"And you are a woman," he replied.

"Yes; I am only a woman," sighed Ah Chut as she flushed and hung her head. "If you should see Wong Yee Shi ask her to mention my name to Wong Kit's father."

"Valvular disease of the heart," read the report of the autopsy surgeon.

"Chew Doo's invisible bullet carried by the spirits," declared the elders of the clan of Chan.

If the spirit of Little Pete could return from the Ten Courts of Justice in the Kingdom of the Dead and walk beside me in the street of the Golden Chrysanthemums at the turning of the night tide it would whisper:

"The Big Chink, who violated the chicken's head oath and lived like a chicken, died like a chicken when he heard Little Chicken crow: 'Your time has come!'"

THE END

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